GUILIELMUS OUTRAMUS S.T.P.
Ecclesiæ S.ti Petri apud Westmonasteriensis
Canonicus.

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TWENTY
SERMONS
PREACHED upon
Several Occasions.

BY

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Ch. C. h.

TWENTY

SERMONS

PREACHED UPON

Several Occasions.

BY

TO THE READER.

Reader,

IT *is well known that the* Author *of theſe following Sermons could never be prevailed upon, either by the* Intreaty *of his Friends, or the* Authority *of his Superiours (though very much urged by both) to publiſh any of his Sermons in* Print; *and his neareſt* Relations *would have paid that* reſpect *to him in this, as in all other things, to have denyed them to the* Publick, *for the ſake of his own Judgment in this matter, had not a forward* Bookſeller, *only to ſerve the ends of his own* profit, *thruſt out into the World Six Sermons under his name, not many Months after his Death. To promote the Sale of which, he endeavours, in an* Epiſtle *before them, to make the* Reader *believe, that although (as he confeſſes) they were taken from the* Author *by a Short-hand-man many years ſince, yet* they were allowed and corrected by himſelf; That they were agreeable to his ſenſe; And that there was no other

more perfect Copy to be procured.

If all this had been true, What right *had the* Bookſeller, *and his* Short-hand Friend *by this to publiſh them in the name of this* Author? *Did the* Author *Correct them for the Preſs? Or is it ſufficient to juſtifie the publiſhing of ſuch Diſcourſes under a Mans name, becauſe they are* agreeable to his ſenſe? *Or if no other* Copy *could be procured, was it therefore neceſſary to publiſh this?*

But this pretence was ſo far from being true, that whoſoever has been abuſed by this Publiſher *ſo much as to buy, and look into thoſe Sermons, will find, that they are ſo far from being* Corrected *by the Hand of this* Author, *that they were never Corrected by any; That they are ſo far from being* agreeable to his ſenſe, *that in very many places they are no* ſenſe *at all; And the* Publiſher *knows very well that he never inquired of any of the* Author's *Relations for any* Copies *or Papers remaining in their hands.*

If he had, he might have been ſhewed Three Sermons upon the firſt Text, Heb. 10. 38. *whereas he has publiſhed but Two of them, and thoſe two put together as one, and that ſo imperfect, ſo inchoherent, and ſo ungrammatical, that the* Reader *muſt be very kind if he would excuſe the* Au-

thor

thor *in many places as well as the* Printer. *One might point to miſtakes in almoſt every Page, ſome of which are very abſurd and intolerable*: *But in regard ſome* Friends *of the* Author's *have thought fit to collect a Volume of his Sermons upon* Theological Subjects (*amongſt which it will be moſt proper to inſert theſe upon the* 10th *of the* Hebrews, *concerning the* Life of Faith, *in connection with other Diſcourſes of* Faith) *it is ſufficient to acquaint the* Reader, *that theſe ſhall be reprinted after the* Author's *own Copy.*

In like manner the Publiſher, *if he had conſulted the* Author's *Friends, might have ſeen that the Second and Third Sermons of* Providence *upon* St. Matt. 10. 29. *are but a part of his* Diſcourſes *upon that Subject, which it will be moſt proper to put together, and publiſh* (*if at all*) *in a Volume of the* Attributes *of God, upon which the* Author *has ſeveral Sermons*: *But beſides that, theſe are but a part of his Meditations upon* Providence, *they are alſo very broken and imperfect in many places, though the* Short-hand-man *has endeavoured, according to his skill in Divinity, to ſupply and fill them up.*

Of the three following, two of them cannot yet be found amongſt the Author's *Papers, ſo that it is very doubtful whe-*

ther they be his or no; and therefore the Publiſher, *beſides the wrong he has done the* Author, *and the World too, in expoſing his labours imperfectly, has alſo (very probably) fathered upon him thoſe that are none of his. The juſt indignation which the* Author's *Friends have taken to this injurious dealing of the* Publiſher, *together with Reports brought frequently to their ears of a deſign of other perſons to publiſh other of his Sermons, inclined them (though they are ſenſible againſt the* Author's *own opinion) to ſet forth a Volume at preſent according to his own Copies: And theſe Twenty being lately preached upon particular* occaſions, *and ſome of them in the moſt auguſt and ſolemn Audience, and all of them deſigned to obviate the evils of the Age, and to ſecure Men in the belief and practice of the true* Religion, *are thought not improper to be firſt offered to the publick view.*

The Author was ſenſible by what Artifices, *what* degrees, *and what* parties *of Men, this moſt excellent conſtitution of the* Church of England *is endeavoured to be undermined; and denying to no Man the liberty of Diſquiſition and Diſcourſe, he underſtood the ſtrength both of their* Arguments *and their* Intereſt: *And the* Reader *may deſcern by theſe Sermons that*

he

he apprehended our danger to ariſe of late from (a confederacy, *it may be, one cannot ſay, but) a* complication *of Enemies,* Papiſts, Libertines, *and* Diſſenters; *but chiefly from the* firſt, *who employ the two latter to work under them, and to weaken the Church of* England, *one by* Prophaneneſs *and the other by* Separation, *that ſo they may argue againſt the ſufficiency of our conſtituion to maintain good Life, and preſerve Unity, and diſpoſe thoſe who are of no Religion and no Church to become* Proſelytes *to theirs. Amongſt the* Libertines *may be reckoned that ſort of Men who, though indeed they have natural conviction of a ſupreme* Being, *pretend to more wit than to be ſatisfied with the Authority of our Bleſſed Saviour; and ſo becauſe they have no good opinion of the Truth of his* Religion, *they neglect* Religion *in general: for what* Theiſt *was ever known to live according to the Principles of Natural* Religion, *to which notwithſtanding he owns himſelf obliged? For the* Diſſenters, *they have many different Opinions amongſt themſelves, ſome of which are here taken notice of, either* ex propoſito *in ſome Sermons, or by the* by *in others.*

So that the whole Collection is an Antidote *very ſeaſonable for the malignity of the Age, and, by the bleſſing of God, may*

have

have ſome profitable effect from the Preſs, as, by the teſtimony of the Hearers, they had from the Pulpit; *and they are offered to the world for that end; not as a Character of the great abilities of the* Author, *and his great Accompliſhments in almoſt all kinds of* Science, *but as an inſtance of his* Zeal *for the Truth, and goodneſs of the Chriſtian Religion in general, and the Church of* England *in particular; eſpecially in this juncture.*

His extraordinary skill in Rabbinical Learning, *and the uſe and ſervice of it to the Confirmation and Illuſtration of the Chriſtian* Theology, *he has made appear to the* learned World *ſome years ſince with great propriety and accuracy of ſtyle, in his Book* De Sacrificiis: *wherein he hath alſo given a proof of his profound skill in the higheſt points of the Divine Wiſdom.*

But what his abilities were in other parts both of Divine and Humane Knowledge, he had not leiſure enough from his Miniſterial labours, *to let the world know. Nor have I ability to make it ſenſible how great they were; or to repreſent the* Gravity, Sobriety, Simplicity, Truth *and* plainneſs *of his Converſation; his* Devotion *to God, and his* Charity *to the Neighbourhood, eſpecially the ſick and afflicted; His indefatigable* Induſtry *in his private Studies,*

To the Reader.

Studies, as well as in the publick offices of his Profeſſion, and his readineſs to impart *and communicate the effects of his mighty pains and induſtry to his Friends; His* Civility, *and* Beneficence *to Learned Foreigners; His* Reſpect *and* Reverence *to his Superiors; together with his* Humility *and* Candor *to his Equals and Inferiors: Which excellent* Vertues, *as they rendred him very valuable and uſeful to the world whilſt he was alive, ſo they will imbalm his memory now he his dead.*

All that needs further to be added, is to beg thy pardon, Reader, for the Errata *of the Preſs, which are too many, and to deſire that if a Sermon of the* Author's *upon the Sin againſt the* Holy Ghoſt, *or any other, be in thine or any other hand that thou knoweſt, thou would pleaſe to reſtore, or ſend notice of it to the* Printer, *that it may be inſerted in another Collection.*

Jam. Gardiner.

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TEXTS
OF THE
SERMONS.

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The

The Firſt Sermon.

ISAIAH 33. 6.

And wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times.

The whole verſe is thus:

And wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times, and ſtrength of ſalvation: The fear of the Lord is his Treaſure.

ALthough the Effects of the great Calamities which we have ſuffered in this Nation, namely, thoſe of a raging Peſtilence, a devouring Fire, ſeveral grievous and bloody Wars, be in ſome meaſure now removed, yet were the minds and thoughts of men never more diſturbed, or more uneaſie than now they are. The reaſon hereof ſeems eſpecially to be this, namely, that moſt deſperate Plot, which

was designed to murder our Prince, and to overthrow our Laws, our Liberties, our Religion, our Spiritual, as well as our Temporal welfare. This, and the fears that it hath awakened sit so close upon mens hearts, and give such sensible apprehensions of future troubles and calamities, that we enjoy not what we have, we find no ease or satisfaction in any thing which we as yet possess. We have indeed a Peace at present, but it is unsetled and uncertain; we have a Religion, and that reformed according to the word of God, but it is dangerously undermined. We have good Laws to preserve our Liberties and just Rights, but know not how long we may retain them: we have a good and fruitful Land, but are not without all apprehensions of dispossession, or at least of great disturbance in it. Which things being so, it should seem our present fears and troubles arise not so much from the sense of any present want, as from the uncertainty of what we have; not from the Evils we feel at present, but those we fear may fall upon us, that is to say, from the *instability of the times.*

This was the thing which cast my thoughts upon the words I have now read,

read, and made them ſeem to be ſuitable to the preſent occaſion. Now theſe ſeem to have been delivered after *Sennacherib* had ſpoiled *Hezekiah* of his Treaſures, to make conditions of Peace with him, but before his Army made its approaches towards *Jeruſalem*, which it ſeems it did in a little time after the making of that Peace, as may appear 2 *Kings* 18. 13,14,15,16,17. Which falſe dealing of *Sennacherib* is noted and cenſured by the Prophet in the beginning of this Chapter, *Iſaiah* 33. 1. *Woe to thee that ſpoileſt, and thou waſt not ſpoiled, and dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt not treacherouſly with thee.* The caſe in ſhort ſeems to be thus. *Sennacherib* had invaded *Judah*, aſſaulted and taken the *fenced cities*, as it is recorded 2 *Kings* 18. 13. He ſo diſtreſſed both *Hezekiah*, and his people, that he freely offered to ſubmit to what conditions, *Sennacherib* would pleaſe to impoſe upon him, *Return from me*, ſays *Hezekiah*, *and that which thou putteſt on me I will bear*, *v.* 14. Theſe conditions were ſo hard (being no leſs than three hundred talents of Silver, and thirty talents of Gold) that he was conſtrained to make them good, by giving *Sennacherib* as well the treaſures of the Temple, all *the Sil-*

ver found in the Houſe of the Lord, as *the treaſures of his own Houſe*, and what was ſtill more diſhonourable, *to cut off the Gold from the Doors of the Temple*, and *the Pillars* which he himſelf had made, *v.* 15, 16.

Yet ſuch it ſhould ſeem was *Sennacheribs* treachery and falſe dealing, that having, as was before related, ſpoiled *Hezekiah* of his treaſure, he preſently, contrary to his promiſe, ſends up an Army towards *Jeruſalem*, the dread whereof filled that City with great amazement and confuſions. In theſe confuſions had the Prophet *Iſaiah* an intimation, that God would exalt his mighty power in the deliverance of *Hezekiah*, and of the City of *Jeruſalem* from theſe ſo great and iminent dangers, and alſo confirm the ſame deliverance, and give ſecure and ſetled times. The former whereof the Prophet declares *v.* 5. *The Lord is exalted, for he dwelleth on high, he hath filled Sion with Judgment and righteouſneſs*; the latter in the following words, *And wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times. Stability* ſignifies ſtrength, and ſettlement; *ſtability of times*, ſafe, ſecure and certain times, times not ſo lyable unto change, as that the fear of domeſtick Troubles, or foreign violence, ſhould either

either disquiet the minds of men, or interrupt them in their duties to God, or their neighbours, or themselves.

And then that *wisdom*, or that *knowledge*, by which the times should be thus established, is the knowledge of God and of his will, and hearty obedience thereunto, in the whole compass of his Laws, as well of those which prescribe our duties to one another, as of those that direct us in Gods worship. I need not say, that this is the sense, wherein wisdom is frequently taken in the Scriptures; for that's a thing that all acknowledge, who pretend to any skill in them: nor need I labour much to prove, that this is the sense of *wisdom* and *knowledge* in the words which I now insist upon; for plain it is, that what the Prophet stiles *judgment and righteousness* in the words immediately antecedent, is here stiled *wisdom* and *knowledge*, *He hath filled Sion with judgment and righteousness*. So he speaks in the fifth verse, and then immediately adds the effect those things should have, under the name of *wisdom* and *knowledge*; for so it follows, *and wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times*, that is to say, *judgment* and *righteousness* shall be so. He varies the words, but not the sense, for then

his discourse would not be coherent. Add hereunto, that what he had styled *wisdom* and *knowledge* in the beginning of the verse, is immediately called *the fear of the Lord*; *wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.* Where he suggests that although *Sennacherib* had spoiled *Hezekiah* of his treasures, which are the usual nerves of War, and the common Instruments of defence; yet that he had such a treasure still, namely, the fear of the true God, as should give *stability to his times.* For as much as this is the truest wisdom, and such wisdom the firmest foundation of Peace and settlement. This reaches all the ends of wisdom, and therefore justly bears its name. So that the sense of the words in hand is the same with that of those before, chap. 32. v. 17. *The work of righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.*

Now the words taken in this sense offer two things to our consideration.

1. The former whereof is a blessing promised, which is *stability of the times*, setled, quiet, and easie days.

2. The latter the proper means or terms,

terms, whereby this bleſſing is procur'd, which is obedience to Gods will in the whole extent of his holy Laws, ſtyled by the Prophet *wiſdom* and *knowledge*. For ſo he ſpeaks to *Hezekiah*, and in his perſon to the nation, *wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times.*

I ſhall begin with the bleſſing promiſed, which is *ſtability in the times*, a ſingular bleſſing to a Nation, being ſuch as moſt effectually tends, or is at the leaſt wholly neceſſary to the producing of all others, whether we conſider it with relation,

1. To the advantages of this World.
2. Or thoſe that concern a better life.

Of the former of theſe I ſhould not ſpeak, being not ſo ſuitable to this place, were it not proper for the occaſion, were it not ſeaſonable in point of time, and now, if ever, to be conſidered, when the great Council of the Land is ſtudying how to ſettle the Nation, to confirm our Peace, to eſtabliſh true and firm foundations of future ſettlement and tranquility; and may expect to have an account of the uſefuleſs of their undertakings opened and laid before the People. But being theſe are our preſent circumſtances, I judge I may juſtly take occaſion to inſiſt a while upon thoſe

advantages, which every Nation may expect from quiet, certain, and ſtable times.

1. And firſt of all, ſuch times as theſe give eaſe of heart, vigour of mind, a free and chearful and active ſpirit, take off the weights of fear and ſorrow, that troubleſome times generally hang upon men's minds, and ſo prepare and diſpoſe to diligence, and give incouragement thereunto, by promiſing good ſucceſs in it. For in ſuch times may every perſon duly hope to reap the fruits of his own Labours, to gain advantage by his diligence, to find an account in his undertakings, he now believes that he ſerves himſelf, or his poſterity, which he values equally with himſelf. And this, as it gives a great incouragement to his diligence: So it Sweetens the labours that attend it, and makes him eaſie to himſelf, as well as uſeful to publick ends. It is not ſo in troubleſome and diſtracted times. In ſuch times every man ſuſpects that one may ſow, and another reap, one may build, and another inhabit, one may plant, and another probably gather the fruit; as we have ſeen in our own age, and many felt by ſad experience. And this is a very great diſcouragement to everyman's diligence

diligence in his Calling. Where is the man that will toyle and labour, wearry his body or his mind, where he cannot hope that he or his heirs ſhall find advantage by all his pains; who will imploy and buſie himſelf at all adventures? build, or plant, or lay up treaſure, when he hath reaſon to ſuſpect, that he is labouring for a ſtranger, or preparing rich, and pleaſant ſpoils for an enemy to feed his luſts upon? And what's the effect of theſe diſcouragements, but a diſconſolate, uſeleſs ſloath, or elſe a diverſion from thoſe labours, whereby he might profit himſelf and others, to live by ſpoyl on other Perſons? which when it once becomes common, ends in general want and poverty, and brings deſtruction upon a Nation. So uſeful, nay ſo wholly neceſſary are ſtable times, to give encouragement to care and diligence in thoſe labours, whereby every man ſerves himſelf, as the publick good is ſerved by all.

2. Stable and ſetled times give men the happieſt opportunities of injoying the fruits of their own endeavours and Gods bleſſings, in peace and quiet and tranquility, without which nothing is enjoyed, but often become the greateſt burdens. Honour it ſelf becomes contemptible, and merit

merit expoſes to reproach in popular tumults and ſeditions. So the Prophet ſuggeſts to us, *Iſaiah* 3. 5. *The people ſhall be oppreſſed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child ſhall behave himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, and the baſe againſt the honourable.*

What advantages are large fortunes, when they are ſo far from giving ſecurity to the owners, that they expoſe them to ſpoil and rapine; when the fear of loſing them gives more trouble, than the poſſeſſion gives content? which is the caſe in unſetled times.

And laſtly, what ſatisfaction is it to have a numerous and hopeful iſſue, when a mans children are in danger to have their minds abuſed by errour, by Popery, Atheiſm, or Infidelity, and their bodies enſlaved by a cruel tyranny? So far are any of theſe things from being comforts in ſuch an age, that they then create the greateſt troubles.

Now therefore happy are thoſe days, thoſe fixed, and certain, and ſtable times, when every man may enjoy himſelf, enjoy his friends, poſſeſs his eſtate in peace and quiet, without the dread of domeſtick troubles, or foreign enemies, when there is no fear of Plots at home,

or

or of a *Sennacherib* from abroad, to interrupt the enjoyment of them.

3. Quiet and ſetled times diſcourage ill deſigning men from attempting ſeditions and commotions. They leave no ground for the luſts of men to hope to proſper in ill deſigns, no expectation of ſucceſs, and therefore either remove the luſts, or put a reſtraint and check upon them. Whereas unſtable and unſetled times are an open Theatre for mens luſts to appear, and act their deſigns upon. Then is every man's Pride encouraged to endeavour advancement by any means, good or evil, it makes no matter; every mans avarice put in hope of making ſpoils upon his neighbour; and every mans private animoſitie of taking revenge upon his enemy. Here is a door ſet wide open to all inordinate luſts and paſſions, which preſently hatch and produce confuſions, and in theſe confuſions he that ſpeaks loudeſt is beſt heard, and moſt believed, though neither the beſt, nor wiſeſt man, from whence it generally comes to paſs, that the ill deſigns which were conceived in unſetled times break out at laſt in wars and tumults, and end in ruine and deſolation. And therefore happy are thoſe aſſured and ſetled times, wherein

there

there is no occaſion given for the luſts of men, for Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition, whether in domeſtick, or foreign enemies, ſo much as to hope to make a change, to ſhake the foundations of peace and righteouſneſs, and therefore conſequently no encouragement to attempt it. For plain it is that ſuch times are of mighty moment and importance to all the advantages of this World.

2. Add hereunto, in the ſecond place, that they are of great importance alſo, in order to thoſe that are far greater, that is to ſay, to thoſe that concern the life to come.

'Tis true indeed, the greateſt ſtability of the times, the firmeſt ſettlement of affairs, is not of it ſelf a certain cauſe of faith, and piety, truth and righteouſneſs, and of the flouriſhing of Religion. But yet it is ſuch a cauſe hereof, that Religion cannot flouriſh without it. It gives the happieſt opportunities for the free and quiet practice of it. And this is the ground of the exhortations of St. *Paul*, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore, that firſt of all Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet, and a peaceable life*

in

in all Godlineſs and Honeſty. He takes for granted, that Gods bleſſing upon *Kings* and thoſe that are in Authority, is the great cauſe of peace and quiet, and then again, that peace and quiet are the moſt happy opportunities for the exerciſe both of *Godlineſs* and *Honeſty*, that is to ſay, of all our duties to God and Men. Unquiet times are apt to diſtract and diſturb our minds, to create many confuſions in them, whereas all the duties of Religion are then performed with the greateſt pleaſure to our ſelves, and beſt acceptance unto God alſo, when he is ſerved without diſtraction.

Unſetled days divert the minds and thoughts of men from the conſideration of things to come in a better World, to ſecure their affairs, to preſerve their concernments here on earth, which ſeem to be in preſent danger. In ſuch days is every man apt to think with himſelf, how he may provide againſt that ſtorm which ſeems juſt ready to fall upon him; how he may ſecure his life and fortune, preſerve his Family, help his Friends, or eſcape his Enemies, and this generally in great diſtraction and trouble of mind; and in the midſt of theſe confuſions his thoughts are ſcattered, his mind diſ-

disordered, and loses those divine affections, which give our prayers the best success both upon God, and upon our selves.

To this I might add, that unsetled times, being, as was before discoursed, the most encouraging opportunities to excite the inordinate lusts of men, Pride, and Avarice, and Animosity, are apt to destroy mutal Charity, mutual confidence amongst men, to leave them jealous one of another, and so to extinguish the true Spirit of Christianity.

How blessed therefore are those days, those fixed and stable and setled times, which nourish Charity, produce peace, and make men easie each to other? When every vertuous and pious person may make his addresses unto God with fixed attention, with stedfast thoughts and with pure affections; when he may pray for what he wants, and render his thanks for what he enjoys, without interruption and distraction either by his own fears and sorrows, or from the lusts of other men. When God, to speak in the words of *Zachary*, *grants unto us that we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.*

2. Having

2. Having thus given you a ſhort account what a ſingular bleſſing it is to men to live in ſtable and ſetled times, let us now proceed to the ſecond general, where we are to conſider the proper methods, whereby this bleſſing may be procured, that is to ſay, the times eſtabliſhed. Thoſe, ſays the Prophet, are *wiſdom* and *knowledge*; and theſe in the language of the Scriptures are due obedience to Gods will in the whole extent of thoſe duties, which every man owes to God, and his Neighbour.

Perhaps you may think that this is a poor and mean expedient to give eſtabliſhment to the times. You rather judge that ſecular Wiſdom, humane Policy, the projects of ſubtle and craſty men, are the only way to ſettle a Nation, and to give ſecurity to the times. And true it is, theſe may ſhift and patch up things for a little while; they may ſerve a turn, and put off a danger for the preſent: But ſure I am, that no Policies, no Devices of humane Wiſdom, can ever lay any firm foundations of Peace and ſettlement without the eſtabliſhment of true Religion, both as it relates to God and men. All other methods whatſoever leave the foundation weak and ruinous, though the ſuperſtructure may be ſpecious,

cious, and carry a face of ſtrength and beauty. He that made the World, and now governs it by his Providence, hath ſo contrived the nature of things, that they can never be firmly ſetled without the practice of truth and righteouſneſs, but may by theſe be ſtrongly ſetled. As will appear if we conſider that theſe things are,

1. Firſt of all the natural cauſes of Peace and Settlement.

2. And then ſecondly, that they procure the eſpecial aids of divine Providence, to give a greater ſucceſs to them, to ſtrengthen, and render them more effectual.

1. I ſhall begin with the former of theſe, and ſhew that the practice of true Religion, as it reſpects both God and men, is a natural cauſe of peace and ſettlement: For ſo it is in two reſpects.

1. As it renders every perſon ſecure and eaſie in his ſtation; ſo it prevents inteſtine Troubles and Seditions.

2. As it produces ſtrength; ſo it ſecures from foreign Enemies.

1. It renders every perſon ſecure and eaſie in his ſtation, and ſo it prevents inteſtine Troubles. Theſe ariſe from mutual injuries, and theſe injuries from

from mens unreasonable lusts and passions, which Christianity would destroy. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members? ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain, ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because you ask not; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* He speaks of the Jews in the *lesser Asia*, and it may be, of some Judaizing Christians mingled with them, who destroyed and ruined one another by mutual slaughters amongst themselves, arising from their inordinate lusts. They were full of Avarice, and Sensuality, swell'd with Ambition and Animosity, and these created mutual injuries, and oppressions, and these oppressions wars and tumults amongst themselves.

But blessed and happy are that people, who unanimously live in the fear of God, and practise justice, and mutual charity amongst themselves. They enjoy themselves, and God's blessings in peace, and quiet, neither designing nor fearing evil amongst themselves; and this gives setlement to the whole, by the ease it gives to every private and single person. When no man is himself op-

preſſed, nor hath any deſire to oppreſs another; when every man is juſt to every other, when charity is added unto juſtice, and ſupplies the wants of ſuch perſons, as are not able to help themſelves; when every man finds his life ſecure, his fortunes ſafe, his name unblemiſhed; when he finds that every man is his friend, and himſelf is ſo to every other, then is his condition eaſie to him; and who will attempt to make a change, to promote confuſions and ſeditions, when he finds every man eaſie to him, and himſelf eaſie unto himſelf?

Nor would theſe errours and miſtakes that will attend humane frailty, while we continue here on earth, conſiderably alter the caſe before us: For the mutual miſtakes and inconveniences, which ariſe meerly from infirmity, are neither wilful, nor pernicious, nor of long continuance; and would readily be repair'd on one hand, and eaſily pardoned on the other, if there were Sincerity of Religion, although attended with imperfection; that is to ſay, if Chriſtianity were ſo practiſed, as every man may and ought to practiſe it, even with the alloy of humane frailty, and the diſadvantages that attend it.

it. Now if what I have ſaid be ſo clear and evident, that it cannot reaſonably be contradicted, the conſequence neceſſarily muſt be this, That the fear of God, and Love of Righteouſneſs, the general practice of Chriſtianity would naturally render every perſon eaſie both to himſelf and others, and give *eſtabliſhment to the times*, ſo far as this could be effected by preventing all inteſtine troubles.

2. Let us add to this in the ſecond place, that it would alſo produce ſtrength, encreaſe the power of any people, and by ſo doing greatly contribute to their ſecurity from foreign Enemies.

Strength moſt certainly it would produce, for it would unite men amongſt themſelves in the bands of mutual love, and charity. It would give them confidence in one another; it would animate them with the ſame mind, diffuſe the ſame ſpirit into them, poſſeſs them all with a publick ſpirit, and joyn their counſels and endeavours for the defence of publick welfare. And would not this be a great ſecurity againſt all Enemies from abroad?

Nor would Religion unite them only among themſelves, but it would alſo encreaſe their treaſure, and make preparation of all thoſe aids, that pub-

lick occaſions might require for their defence againſt foreign Enemies. What hath conſumed the wealth and treaſure of this Nation, but Pride, and Luxury, and Senſuality? and what can encreaſe the ſame again, but Reformation of thoſe vices by ſobriety, temperance, and frugality? which are as truly Chriſtian vertues, and as real parts of true Religion, when practiſed in the fear of God, as any other Vertues whatſoever.

Nor muſt I omit to put you in mind, what courage it would produce amongſt us, to find our ſelves firmly united amongſt our ſelves, to find our vertues increaſe our wealth, and give a ſufficient ſtable fund to make preparation againſt an Enemy: and how would this courage be heightened, if we were conſcious to our ſelves, that we were a people fearing God, and loving righteouſneſs? For then we ſhould eaſily be perſwaded to belive that God would give us aſſiſtance in all our ſtraits, that he would defend us againſt our Enemies; that he, who is juſt, and true, and righteous, would defend a juſt, and a righteous people.

2. Which leads me to the ſecond method, whereby the practice of Religion in its whole extent to God and men,

men, would give ſtability to the times; and that is, by procuring the aids of Divine Providence, and by engageing the Power of God to give ſecurity to that People by whom he is faithfully ſerved, and honoured.

The whole Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Nation is little elſe but an account how God Almighty raiſed or depreſſed, bleſſed or puniſhed that people, according to the various inſtances of their obedience, or diſobedience. When they provoked him to diſpleaſure by the iniquities of their lives, he forſook, and abandon'd them to themſelves: when they repented of their ſins, and humbly returned unto him again, he then delivered them from their Enemies, and that many times, when their deliverance was beyond the power of ſecond cauſes.

This was the caſe in the very days of *Hezekiah*, which the Prophet *Iſaiah* had in his eye, when he delivered the words before us. *Salmanaſar* had not long before invaded, and conquered the *ten Tribes*, and carried them away into Captivity. *Sennacherib* had now made an attempt on the *other two*, he had beſieg'd, aſſaulted, and taken ſeveral of their fenced Cities: He had ſo ſtraitned *Hezekiah*, that he was forced to

buy his peace, or rather a falſe appearance of it, by ſurrendering all his treaſures to him. For afterwards his Army marches toward *Jeraſalem*; the approach whereof was ſo dreadful, that it fill'd the City with great amazements and conſternations. Yet in the midſt of theſe confuſions, in theſe unſettled and ſhaken times, did God aſſure that pious King, that he would eſtabliſh him in his Throne, and give him ſtable and ſettled times. *Wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times*: And he made good what he promiſed to him by the ſlaughter of *Sennacherib*'s Army by an inviſible Power from Heaven, *Iſaiah* 37. 36. So great is the faithfulneſs of Gods Providence over righteous and holy Princes, and Nations; ſo great his care to give encouragement to Piety, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, when they are faithfully and duly practiſed.

I do not ſay, but that unrighteous Nations alſo may thrive and flouriſh for a time; for I know that God uſes the power of one unrighteous and wicked people to puniſh and to deſtroy another. But this is done, when both are wicked and ill-deſerving; to which I add, that when the one hath done God's work

work upon the other, when the ſtrong hath eaten up the weak, the ſtrong it ſelf either becomes a ſpoil and prey to another ſtronger than it ſelf (as the *Aſſyrians* did to the *Perſians*, and as the *Perſians* to the *Greeks*, and the *Greeks* themſelves unto the *Romans*, and the *Romans* to the *Goths* and *Vandals*) or elſe is crumbled and broke to pieces by inteſtine factions and ſeditions, as the Chriſtian Empire in the Eaſt, which made it a prey to the *Turks* and *Saracens*.

In the mean time, allowing the fall and deſolation of one unrighteous and ſinful Nation by the unrighteouſneſs of another; yet will not this afford any argument to conclude, that a faithful, righteous, and holy people ſhall find no aids from Divine Providence, to ſecure them from a wicked Enemy, although more powerful than themſelves.

Having thus ſhewed that Piety, and Vertue, Truth and Righteouſneſs compoſe the diſorders, ſettle the affairs, confirm the peace, and ſtrength of Nations, and gain ſtability to the times, let us now reflect upon this diſcourſe, and ſo apply it to our ſelves.

1. And firſt of all, hence we learn, what hath diſquieted, what hath unſet-

tled our own times, and made them troubleſome and uneaſie. We have not ſtudied what the Prophet ſtiles *wiſdom* and *knowledge*, we have not lived in the fear of God, and Chriſtian Charity each to other; and the want of theſe hath hindered the ſettlement of our days, and the vices quite contrary to them made them troubleſome and unſtable.

I need not ſay, that our Vanity, Luxury, and Prodigality have impoveriſhed us to a great degree, and poverty created diſcontents, and made us uneaſie and unquiet. I need not take any pains to prove that our Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition have cauſed and fomented mutual enmities amongſt our ſelves, and that theſe have diſordered and unſettled us. But that which I cannot forbear to mention, and ſomething largelier to conſider, is the monſtrous Atheiſm, and Infidelity, that have ſecretly taken root amongſt us, and fill'd the Land with ſtrange prophaneneſs, with contempt of Piety and Religion, nay ſcorn of the very profeſſion of it; and that to ſuch prodigious meaſures, as were never known in former ages of Chriſtianity.

And can we wonder that our condition is ſo unſettled, that our affairs

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are ſo uncertain, while the very foundations of all true peace are ſo much ſhaken, and undermin'd?

Perhaps you may think it very ſtrange that Popery ſhould ever have adventured to lift up its head in this Nation; that a Religion expreſly contrary to the holy Scriptures, contrary to all Chriſtian Antiquity, contrary to natural light and reaſon, diſagreeable to our very ſenſes in the ſtrange fiction of tranſubſtantiation; a Religion contrary to our Intereſts, that would enſlave our minds and bodies both at once, and was upon all theſe accounts juſtly abandoned by our Anceſtors, ſhould ever attempt to return upon us. But this will not appear ſo ſtrange, if we conſider how much Atheiſm, and Infidelity, how much profaneneſs and ſcorn of piety, how many diviſions among our ſelves, how many dangerous Schiſms and Hereſies have infected and overflowed the Nation: for how could it be, but that theſe evils muſt give a very great encouragement to Popiſh Emiſſaries, and Seducers, to conſpire the deſtruction of Religion? They know that they who have no Religion (and many ſuch there be amongſt us) by being ſuch are prepared for any; that all Religions are a-

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like to them that are of none at all. Upon this account I make no doubt but that they themſelves have greatly laboured to open a door to all vices, all profaneneſs, and immorality, that ſo Popery might creep in with that prophane and wicked Spirit, which themſelves had ſpread, and diffuſed amongſt us.

Moreover, is it not moſt apparent, that they have put on all ſhapes, and dreſſed up themſelves in all the diſguiſes of the ſeveral parties in the Nation, the more to divide us amongſt our ſelves, and to make us odious one to another, as well as ridiculous to our neighbours? that ſo being weary of theſe confuſions among our ſelves, and deſpicable by our rents and factions, we might at length conſent to ſettlement on their foundations, and rather chuſe to be at reſt by being reconciled to them, than ſtill divided and rent in pieces by infinite fractions amongſt our ſelves. If things be thus, as I fear they are, I need not ſay what that is, which hath given us ſuch unſtable times. We have undermined our own foundations by our prophaneneſs, and irreligion; we have not ſtudied that *wiſdom*, that would have given us ſtable times.

2. Seeing *wiſdom* and *knowledge*, ſeeing

ing the true fear of God, and hearty obedience to his Laws are the Expedients the Prophet offers to give *ſtability to the times*, hence we learn what is the true and proper method to gain that bleſſing amongſt our ſelves.

The practice of theſe two plain commands, which enjoyn us, To love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbours as our ſelves, would give us ſtable and quiet times, give us peaceable and eaſie days, procure us reſt and peace, and order, after all our labours and confuſions. Theſe would certainly do the thing, that no wiſdom, power, or policy can ever poſſibly effect without them.

Can a Nation be waſted and exhauſted by its own riot and prodigality, and not be expoſed to a foreign Enemy? or can a Nation be ſo expoſed, and enjoy a ſecure and ſettled Peace? Can the members of the ſame Society live in mutal hatred and animoſity, ariſing from Avarice and Ambition, and yet enjoy quiet,& certain,and eaſie days?

The Wiſdom of God hath ſo contrived the very nature of things themſelves, that peace and war, ſtrength and weakneſs,health and ſickneſs are as conſiſtent each with other, as quiet times with

with reſtleſs luſts, Peace with wickedneſs and irreligion. *The wicked are like a troubled Sea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt, there is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked.* Iſaiah 57. 20, 21. Sin is uneaſie to it ſelf, a conſtant diſeaſe, a daily vexation to the ſinner; and it is ſo to a Nation likewiſe, when it is national and univerſal. And ſure it is one of the greateſt vanities to hope that God ſhould preſerve by miracle, where people wilfully ſerve thoſe luſts, which naturally work their own deſtruction. Whenſoever providence works a miracle to preſerve a perſon or a Nation, it is to preſerve thoſe that cannot; not thoſe that will not preſerve themſelves, but wilfully ruſh upon their ruine.

But is there any man in the world that wilfully ſtudies his own deſtruction? do we not all wiſh, and long for ſuch ſtability in the times, as may give us eaſie and quiet minds, ſecure our affairs, ſucceed our labours, confirm our ſtrength, and deliver us from all thoſe fears and dreads, that have given us ſo much pain and ſorrow?

I make no doubt but that we do deſire ſuch days with all our hearts. I make no queſtion but there are many of ſuch a Spirit, that they would willingly

lingly undertake the greateſt labours to procure them. I do not queſtion but that the generality of the Nation, if they were aſſaulted by an Enemy, would hazard their fortunes, expoſe their lives, adventure what was deareſt to them, to maintain their ancient rights, and liberties. And would it not be as eaſie for us, and more efficacious to theſe ends, to reform our lives, to forſake our ſins, and turn from the evil of our ways? Why ſhould a man be willing to ſpill his very blood, and unwilling to reform his ſins for the ſecurity of his Country? Why are we willing to uſe thoſe means, that are more grievous and leſs effectual for our welfare, namely to hazard life and fortune for ſecuring theſe very things themſelves, and neglect the eaſie and efficacious, the reformation of our lives? Would it be a burden to love God with all our hearts, to place our hope and truſt in him, to ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days? Would it be troubleſome and uneaſie, to love our neighbours with ſincerity, and to be ſo beloved by them; to be freed from mutual fears and jealouſies, from all animoſities each to other?

O how blind are the minds of men not to ſee the things that concern their peace, not to obſerve that Chriſt's commands are a light, an eaſie, a gentle yoke! but rather to ſtudy their own ſecurity by thoſe very things that overthrow it, by fraud, or violence, or worldly craft, than by the practice of thoſe vertues, which would eaſe their minds, ſecure their fortunes, ſucceed their labours, and make them happy as well in the life that now is, as in that to come.

How bleſſed and happy might we be, if we would follow Gods directions! how eaſily might we ſpend our days even in this frail and mortal life, how firmly might we ſettle the times, which are now ſo wavering and uncertain, if we would ſpend but half that time in the ſubduing of our luſts, that we do in the gratification of them; if we would but take half that pains to poſſeſs our hearts with love to God, and mutual Charity each to other, and in fervent Prayers, in humble thankſgivings, in Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, that we do in the ſervice of our luſts? This would undoubtedly amend the days, ſettle our Intereſts, and bleſs us with quiet aud ſtable times. This would

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be a fair return to God Almighty for the favour which we now commemorate, for reſtoring our Prince, our Laws and Religion, after we were deprived of them by former Ruines and Confuſions.

Thus God of his mercy open our eyes, that we may timely underſtand, and practiſe the things that concern our peace: then *ſhould there be no breaking in, nor going out, no complaining in our ſtreets; and happy is that people that is in ſuch a caſe; yea happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.* Pſal. 144. 14, 15.

God of his mercy grant, &c.

The

The Second Sermon.

PSALM 68. 28.

Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us.

The whole verſe is thus:

Thy God hath commanded thy ſtrength: Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us.

THIS Pſalm, as judicious men conceive, was written by *David*, when he removed the Ark of God from the houſe of *Obed-Edom* to *Sion*. Which may be the reaſon, why it begins with theſe words, which *Moſes* uſed on the like occaſions; namely, when he removed the ſame *Ark*, which are recorded *Numb.* 10. 35. *Riſe up Lord, and let thine Enemies be ſcattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* So *David* here in the firſt verſe, *Let God ariſe, and let his Enemies*

nemies be ſcattered, and let them that hate him flee before him. And having lived to ſee the day wherein the holy *Ark* of God, the *Symbol* of his eſpecial preſence, was to be fixed in its own place, which God himſelf had choſen for it, he thought it meet to recollect the many other favours and mercies, which God had granted the Jewiſh Nation, and to render him hearty thanks for them; namely, for his ſingular Providence in conducting the People thorough the Wilderneſs, after their deliverance out of *Egypt*, 6, 7, 8. verſes, for his planting them in the promiſed land, a land flowing with Milk and Hony, and fruitful even to a miracle, ſo at the *ninth* and *tenth verſes*; for the powerful Aids of his gracious Providence in diſpoſſeſſing the former Inhabitants, in ſcattering the Armies of their Kings, that his people might poſſeſs their Countries, 12, 13, 14.

And having then in the following verſes largely returned his thanks to God for all the great and admirable things, which he had wrought for the Jewiſh Nation, in order to their ſtrength and ſettlement, he prays for the continuance of his favour; and of their preſent peace

and welfare, *Strengthen O God what thou haſt wrought for us.* In which words you may obſerve theſe two generals.

1. An acknowledgement made to God that it was he (and he alone) who had planted and ſettled them in the land, and wrought thoſe great and mighty works, whereby they were planted and ſettled in it. What hath been done, ſaith he, *thou haſt wrought for us.*

2. An ardent Prayer to God to ſtrengthen, that is, to continue what he had pleaſed to work for them, *Strengthen O God that which thou haſt wrought for us.*

1. I begin with the firſt, which is the acknowledgement made to God, that it was he, who had planted and ſettled them in the land, and wrought thoſe great and mighty works, whereby they were planted and ſettled in it: where I muſt not omit to take ſome notice, that divine Providence concerns it ſelf in the Adminiſtration, Rule, and Government of the affairs of mankind.

Which though it be a general ſubject, yet muſt I ſtay a while upon it, becauſe the truth of this one thing is the very foundation of all Religion, and more ſpecially of that particular part of

of it, which we are to exerciſe at this time, which is, to render our thanks to God for reſtoring our lawful Prince to us, and the bleſſings attending his Reſtitution, namely, our *Religion*, *Laws*, and *Liberties*. If this was not done by Divine Providence, it would be flattery or miſtake to return any thanks to God for it; but if it was, as it was indeed, then to neglect to praiſe him for it, would be a Sacrilegious ingratitude. Now therefore let us a while reflect upon the Arguments and Demonſtrations that make it evident there is a Providence, that is, that God concerns himſelf, and interpoſes his power and wiſdom in the Adminiſtration of humane affairs, and all the concernments in the World.

1. And firſt of all, had we no more than the light of nature to give us aſſurance that this is ſo, even that might effectually ſerve to do it. That very light evidently ſhews that there is a God who made the World, and all the Creatures therein contained, from the admirable ſtructure and contrivance, clearly appearing in the whole, and every part thereof. And ſuch are the works of Gods Creation, as evidently ſhew an infinit wiſdom,

power, and bounty in him that is the Author of them; and there is nothing more unreaſonable, than to Imagine that infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, either cannot, or will not interpoſe in the ordering of the affairs of men. No man will ſay he cannot do it, for this is againſt the natural notion of a God, and, is moſt evidently contradicted by what he hath already done in the Creation of the World, a work of infinite power and wiſdom. And if any will ſay he will not do it, his reaſon neceſſarily muſt be this, namely, want of concernment in God for us, that is, want of kindneſs to us, the nobleſt works of his own hands, which is moſt evidently contradicted in the love already ſhewed to us, in that he hath not only made us, but provided all things needful for us, and given us infinitely great advantages over all the reſt of his viſible Creatures, and ſtill continues all theſe favours; from whence it appears that there is nothing more unreaſonable, than to imagine or ſuſpect, that God either cannot, or that he will not interpoſe in the adminiſtration of our affairs. It is no toyl to him to do it, his wiſdom and power are never weary.

To

To do it, is ſuitable to that goodneſs which he hath already ſhewed unto us, and beſides it is moſt extream folly to fancy that God would imploy an infinite power and wiſdom in the Creation of the World, and then abandon it unto chance, and concern himſelf no further in it.

The ſame wiſdom that could not but make it for an end, cannot but ſtill purſue the end for which he made it, in the ordering, Rule, and Government of it. To act for no end argues folly; to ceaſe to purſue an end propounded, evidently argues want of wiſdom: from whence it appears that the wiſe God both had an end in the Creation of the World, and that he ſtill purſues that end, by the Rule and Government of his Providence.

2. Thus far ſpeaks the light of nature, but now if we riſe a degree higher, and take a view of Revelation made by God in his Holy Word, here we find expreſs witneſs, and Authentick record of Gods Providence in the rule and Government of the World.

1. For firſt of all, God doth in moſt expreſs Language own the Government of the World, aſſume and vindicate it to himſelf, *See now*, ſaith he, *that I*,

even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. Deuter. 32. 39. Whereunto add that of the Prophet, *I am God, and there is none elſe, I am God and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. Saying, my counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.* Iſaiah 46. 9, 10. From whence obſerve, that God expreſly declares himſelf to be the Governour of the World, aſſumes this as his proper right, and certainly God doth not declare himſelf to do what indeed he doth not, nor aſſumes what doth not belong to him.

2. And then further, as God himſelf expreſly owns the Rule and Government of the World, ſo do all wiſe men aſcribe it to him: *Thou even thou art Lord alone,* ſaith *Nehemiah, Thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hoſt, the earth and all things that are therein, the Seas, and all that is therein, and thou preſerveſt them all.* Nehem. 9. 6. Where he aſcribes as well the preſervation, as the Creation of all to God; and certainly he did not deſign to flatter him by aſcribing more than he did unto him.

3. And

3. And add hereunto the ſtyle and Title, wherein the Scriptures repreſent God. They ſtyle him Lord, and thereby own his right and title to the World. They ſtyle him King, and thereby own his Government of it. *The Lord is King for ever and ever*, Pſal. 10. 16. and *the Lord ſitteth King for ever*, Pſal. 29. 10. Nay they expreſly ſtyle him *Governour, the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is the Governour among the Nations*, Pſal. 22. 28. and call upon the Nations to rejoyce under the righteouſneſs of his reign. *O let the Nations be glad for joy, for thou ſhalt judge the people righteouſly, and govern the Nations upon earth*, Pſal, 67. 4.

Now ſo univerſal is God's Providence, that it is concerned in every Creature; in man, as bearing his own Image; in meaner Creatures, as made for man. *Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing; and yet one of them ſhall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are numbered; fear not therefore, for ye are of more value than many ſparrows*, Math. 10. 29.

So far doth God conſider man, that he is concerned in all his actions; he commands, he aſſiſts, he rewards the good; he forbids, and puniſhes what is evil;

and though he permit it to be done, though he do not irreſiſtably hinder it, yet hath he an end in that permiſſion, which is to bring good out of evil, and uſes it for his own glory. This is the nature, this is the extent of Gods Providence, a thing ſo neceſſary to be believed, that all our Prayers, all our thankſgivings, all our obedience depend upon it. He that believes God will do nothing, hath no reaſon to pray for any thing. He that believes he hath done nothing, hath no reaſon to give him thanks. He that believes he is unconcerned in the good, or evil of mankind (as every man muſt that denies his providence) hath no reaſon to *love*, or *fear* him, that is, no reaſon to *obey* him.

But being, as we have now proved, God doth concern his power and wiſdom in the adminiſtration of our affairs; hence we learn to own and acknowledge the hand of God in all our ſucceſſes and advantages, and to render him hearty thanks for them. *Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.*

They are words of God himſelf, *Pſalm* 50. 15. wherein he requires a double acknowledgment of his Providence, firſt in making an addreſs to him in all

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our difficulties, ſtraits, and dangers; and then in the grateful return of praiſe for our deliverance out of trouble. This he requires as due unto him, this he challenges as debt, nor can it be denyed unto him without ingratitude and injuſtice, and that which ſhould ſo much the more perſwade us to a chearful thankfulneſs towards God for every mercy we receive, is becauſe our hearty thanks and praiſes is all the return we can make to God, and becauſe this is ſo eaſily made, prompted even by nature it ſelf, and by the love we bear to our ſelves; and becauſe that mercy is never well and duly uſed, that is not alſo thankfully received; and it were better to want the greateſt and higheſt bleſſings, that can concern this preſent life, than to abuſe, or not uſe them well. The former is but a calamity, the latter a very provoking ſin; the former only troubleſome to us, the latter diſhonourable unto God.

And being we are ſo far concerned to make a return of thanks to God for every ſingle and private favour, how much more for publick bleſſings? how much more for that ſo happy and gracious Providence, which calls us together at this time; the reſtitution of

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our Prince to the poſſeſſion of his Throne, and to the exerciſe of that Government, which by inheritance belongs unto him.

You cannot expect that I ſhould attempt, much leſs be able to give a perfect and full deſcription of this ſo great a mercy to us, this is indeed beyond my purpoſe, becauſe ſo much above my ability. But ſomething of it may appear, if we conſider, Firſt, the great effects and iſſues of it; Secondly, the ſeveral difficulties and obſtructions, that ſeemed to lie in the way to it; Thirdly and laſtly, the manner wherein it was done.

1. If we conſider it in its effects; theſe were not only the re-eſtabliſhment of the Nation upon its ancient Laws and Liberties, but of the true Reformed Religion, wherewith it had been formerly bleſſed, by the infinite mercy of God to it: both very great and ſignal mercies.

1. We had been greatly oppreſſed and grieved by a long and violent Uſurpation, we had been broken all to pieces, changed from one form to another, toſſed and tumbled to and fro, thoſe that oppreſſed us never finding a firm foundation to ſettle themſelves

or

or us upon; no man could gueſs, no man conjecture the year before, either who ſhould Govern the year following, or what kind of Government ſhould be amongſt us. Every year brought forth new Counſels, new Deſigns, and Forms of Government, and ſo indeed was like to do, when we were beſide the true foundation.

All this while whatſoever hands had power over us, whereſoever the Uſurpation lay, the Power was Arbitrary and unjuſt, oppreſſing and vexing where it pleaſed, without controul and contradiction. To ſay no more, the Counſels of thoſe that ruled over us were fooliſh, tyrannous, and unſtable. The folly of them made us ridiculous, the tyranny of them made us miſerable, and their inſtability made us weak.

This being ſo, methinks we ſhould never recollect the ſingular favour and grace of God in reſtoring our lawful Prince unto us, in reſtoring our ancient Laws and Liberties by the reſtitution of our Prince, without a deep and feeling ſenſe of this ſo timely and great deliverance, and ſerious and hearty thankfulneſs for it.

2. Eſpecially if we further conſider, that the ſame wiſe and gracious Providence,

vidence, which reſtored our lawful Prince to us, brought back the free and publick uſe of that Religion, which is, without all doubt and ſcruple, the moſt agreeable to the Scripture, the moſt agreeable to Antiquity, the moſt Primitive and Apoſtolical in Doctrine, Worſhip, and in Government, the moſt peaceable, wiſe, and holy, the moſt conſiſtent with Civil Government, the apteſt to make men good and happy both in this and the other world, of any Religion whatſoever publickly owned in any Nation. And as to that particular inſtance of obedience to the civil Magiſtrate, I may very truly and juſtly ſay, *firſt*, that they of the Roman Church teach Doctrines inconſiſtent with it; and *then further*, that there is not any other Church that ſo expreſly declares for it, that profeſſes it an indiſpenſible duty rather to ſuffer, than move ſedition, with that frankneſs, with that openeſs, with that clearneſs, nor, as I believe, with that ſincerity, that the Church of *England* doth profeſs it.

Being then, the benefits which attended the reſtitution of our Prince were both ſo numerous, and ſo great, Let us heartily praiſe the Author of them, let us remember who it was, that wrought

wrought ſo great deliverance for us, and not deny to return ſo deſerved, ſo ſmall a tribute as our praiſes, and thankſgivings to him.

2. And which may ſerve to move to this with greater efficacy and ſucceſs, is the ſeveral difficulties and obſtructions, that might have hindered our deliverance, had not God himſelf appeared for it. Many attempts had been made before to ſhake off the yoke that was upon us, and to reſtore our Prince and Liberties, but theſe attempts were not ſucceſsful, nor had they other effects or iſſues, than to encreaſe our former burdens and enrage the Enemy they ſhould have conquered.

The Uſurpation had been long, and length of time had given ſome ſtrength and credit to it, and made it ſeem almoſt ridiculous to hope for any deliverance from it. Beſides all this, it had ſpread an intereſt far and wide throughout the Nation, it had drawn in many to ſhare in it, it had made it ſelf many friends, and alliances, and relations; It had given greatneſs and power to ſome, riches and honours unto others, it made it ſelf uſeful and neceſſary, as was ſuggeſted, and believed; believed I ſay, by many perſons, to the very welfare

fare of the Nation, which gave no little ſtrength unto it.

3. And yet when God appeared againſt it, when he, whoſe Providence rules the World, deſigned to put an end unto it, how eaſily was it blown away, and ſcattered like chaff before the wind? What a wonderful folly and infatuation blinded the Counſels that were for it? what a change was wrought in the hearts of men, unanimouſly to appear againſt it? what general deſires and inclinations now ſuddainly kindled in mens hearts to their rightful Prince, their ancient Laws, and the former Government of the Nation? and whence was this zeal and vigour, this general harmony of inclinations, this agreement of Councils and endeavours, but only from the God of Spirits, from him that moves the hearts of men, *when*, and *where*, and *whither* he pleaſes, by ſtrong though inviſible operations. And which further entitles God to our deliverance, was, that it was wrought without Arms, without war, without the effuſion and loſs of blood, in a ſtill, and quiet, and peaceable manner.

This ſhews that it was from the God of peace, this owns him for its proper Author, and to him belongs the honour

nour of it. To us the due and proper uſe of ſuch a timely and great deliverance.

2. Having thus diſpatched the *former* general, namely the acknowledgement made to God, that it is he that ſettles Kingdoms and Common-wealths, proceed we now unto the *latter*, which is the prayer put up to him; *Strengthen O God what thou haſt wrought for us*: where we have theſe two things ſuggeſted.

1. The neceſſity of Gods aſſiſtance for the confirmation and eſtabliſhment of the Societies of mankind eſpecially.

2. And Secondly, his willingneſs to eſtabliſh them upon their due and right behaviour, both which things are plainly granted by him that made this prayer for it, elſe had the prayer it ſelf been uſeleſs.

1. The firſt thing then that is ſuggeſted, is the neceſſity of God's aſſiſtance for the eſtabliſhment and confirmation of the Societies of mankind. And had we no more for the demonſtration of the neceſſity of Gods aſſiſtance to this purpoſe than the very nature of mortal men, even this might ſerve for the proof of it.

All the affairs of mankind depend upon

upon the actions of men, their actions depend upon their Counſels, and their Counſels (generally) upon their paſſions, and theſe upon ſo many accidents, ſo many little uncertain cauſes, ſo numerous, ſo various things, that it is no wonder that every day produces ſo many alterations; the wonder is, that the greateſt things that depend upon ſuch uncertain cauſes, the greateſt Kingdoms and Common-Wealths, have not more and quicker revolutions, greater, and more ſudden changes, than what we generally find have been.

The ſtrength and ſettlement of every Government, of every Kingdom and Common-Wealth, depends not only upon the cloſe and entire Union of the members of the ſame Society amongſt themſelves, (a thing not eaſie to be had) but upon all the ſeveral cauſes, that keep the balance even and ſteddy between the neighbouring Nations alſo; which cauſes are ſo very numerous, and ſo various, mutable, and uncertain, that the balance would daily change and vary, did not God himſelf hold the ſcales, and keep things even by his own power. It is impoſſible to give an account of all the cauſes that may produce ſtrange alterations in the

Societies

Societies of mankind, unleſs providence ſhall interpoſe for their continuance and preſervation.

A ſudden fire may break out in a Capital City, and preſently conſume the greateſt part of the Wealth and Treaſure of a Nation. A tempeſt, or violent inundation, an earthquake, or thunder from above, may have the very ſame effects. A general Plague may ſweep away ſuch vaſt multitudes of the Inhabitants, as that the reſt may be expoſed to the invaſion of their neighbours. This gave *Sparta* a great advantage againſt *Athens*. The dulneſs and idleneſs of one Country may give opportunity to another to overgrow it in wealth and power, and ſo to conquer and enſlave it.

The Vice and Luxury of a People may ſoon conſume their own ſtrength, and bring the ſame diſtreſs and difficulty upon a Country that they uſually bring on a ſingle Family: Eaſe and plenty, and wealth it ſelf may firſt occaſion diſuſe of Arms, and then infect a whole Nation with a general ſoftneſs, and effeminacy, and ſo expoſe it to the Uſurpation of a hardier and more needy People. Thus fell the *Perſians* before the *Greeks*. The death of a

Prince or a great Man may prove de-
ſtructive to a People. When *Epami-*
nondas the *Theban* fell, *Thebes* it ſelf
fell with him, was never proſperous
before nor after him. Add hereunto
what violent changes and alterations
domeſtick Seditions may produce in eve-
ry Nation, and how many cauſes and
little accidents may eaſily produce ſuch
Sedition. The errours and miſtakes of
Magiſtrates, the natural inconſtancy of
the People, the ambition of Men of Wit
and Parts, or ſuch as fanſie themſelves
to be ſo, their mutual enmities amongſt
themſelves, their envy at each others
greatneſs, their infinite rage and indig-
nation, when they fail of what they
aſpire after. Theſe, with infinite other
cauſes, (which are impoſſible to be
numbred) do as naturally tend to the
diſſolution of publick bodies of Civil
Governments and Societies, as all the
diſeaſes, and fatal accidents to which
mans body is obnoxious, both from with-
in and without alſo, to the deſtruction
of his body.

Now to what end is this diſcourſe?
To ſhew the need, that all the concern-
ments of Mankind, that the greateſt
States and Kingdoms have of ſupport
from Divine Providence; being not on-

ly ſo inclinable to crumble to pieces of themſelves by the diſeaſes that are within them, but likewiſe ſo obnoxious too to be daſhed to pieces each by other.

And if the very Civil Societies of Mankind need the aſſiſtance of Gods Providence for their continuance, how much more doth Religion want it? Religion, if true, is a ray from God, and depends as much upon his influence, as the beam depends upon the Sun. And being planted in us men, muſt needs partake of our infirmities, and therefore is apt even of it ſelf, like other eſtabliſhments and conſtitutions, to vary from Primitive Inſtitution, and loſe its original ſtrength and purity. So it came to paſs, that Chriſtianity, which in the firſt and Primitive ages maintained it ſelf againſt all the cruelties of perſecution by the zeal and piety of its followers, afterwards ſuffered ſtrange decays; firſt by infinite ſwarms of Hereſies, and then by Ignorance and Superſtition, which now is reel'd to the other extreme, namely, to Atheiſm and Infidelity, and to the contempt of all Religion.

Nor need we wonder it ſhould be difficult to preſerve ſo wiſe and holy a Religion as that which Chriſt hath re-

vealed to us in its original ſtrength and purity, for it hath ſtrong and numerous Enemies. Every mans luſts are at enmity with it, every mans vanity apt to corrupt it, every mans Ignorance apt to miſtake it, nay the very Religion of ſome perſons, their pride and pretence to Inſpiration the greateſt Enemy to this Religion.

Beſides all this, there are ſeveral accidents that may have dangerous effects upon it according to the nature of times and places. If the Miniſters of it be poor and mean, this generally brings contempt on them, and upon Religion for their ſakes. If they be rich, this creates envy, and then Sacriledge is Reformation.

If a National Church be guarded and ſetled by the Laws of the State, Diſſenters complain of perſecution; and if it be not ſo guarded, it is impoſſible it ſhould be national, that is, that one and the ſame thing ſhould ever be able to approve it ſelf to an infinite difference of apprehenſions. If a Church be ſetled by the Laws of the State, and thoſe not put in Execution, oppoſers have a double advantage; the Laws of the State being againſt them, give them all the advantage of being thought

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to ſuffer perſecution; The not executing thoſe Laws gives them all the advantages of Toleration, and truly they have great advantages that have both theſe put together, that of a ſeeming perſecution, and that of a real Toleration. To theſe I might add many others inſtances to ſhew the frailty and mutability of all the Societies of mankind, and how much help they do require from the power and Providence of God Almighty for their eſtabliſhment and preſervation.

2. But I have ſaid enough of this, and ſhall now proceed to the next particular, which is the willingneſs of God Almighty to afford his help and aſſiſtance to them upon their due and right behaviour.

Now the terms whereupon Divine Providence uſually ſtrenghtens and ſettles Nations in peace, and quiet, and proſperity, are (1.) either general, or,

(2.) More particular.

(1.) The general terms are the piety and vertue of a Nation.

(2.) The more particular are due reverence to the Magiſtrate, and chearful obedience to the Laws.

The former of theſe, that is to ſay, piety and vertue, are ſo neceſſary, ſo indiſpenſable to this end, that it is impoſ-

ſible that any Nation ſhould flouriſh and be ſecure without them.

Prophaneneſs, impiety, and irreligion, riot, and luxury, and oppreſſion are ſo deſtructive to the peace and ſtrength of every Nation, that would God leave them to themſelves, and to their natural effects and iſſues, would he ſtand neuter, or indifferent, and bring no other evils on them, than what they bring upon themſelves, they would at length deſtroy a Nation; for a people abandoned to prophaneneſs can have no conſcience, faith, or truth to knit them together in ſociety, and the vices of luxury and exceſs are like a flame that eats and devours its own fuel, and then periſhes together with it, dies and vaniſhes when that is conſumed. But God is far from being indifferent to any National ſins or vices; his Judgments indeed may be delayed, but they are ſure to come at laſt, and that in moſt ſevere diſpleaſure, they have iron hands though leaden heels, and come with ſo much greater violence for having been ſo long delayed. Prophaneneſs, wickedneſs, and impiety deſtroyed the Kingdom of the Jews, a Kingdom ſetled by peculiar Providence, and under a Family choſen by God, and anointed by his

his ſpecial Command. God hath preſcribed it as a Law, as a certain Rule to his own Providence, not to protect any ſuch people, as live in rebellion againſt himſelf: and this we learn from his own words, *Deut.* 5. 29. *O that there were ſuch a heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.* Where he is pleaſed to repreſent it as a thing even out of his own power (becauſe ſo contrary to that Law, which he hath preſcribed to his own Providence) to make it well with an impious people; ſo neceſſary and ſo indiſpenſable are piety and vertue to the eſtabliſhment of a Nation.

2. But now the more particular terms requiſite to the ſame eſtabliſhment are due reverence unto the Magiſtrate, chearful obedience to the Laws, quiet and peaceable diſpoſitions. Theſe are ſo requiſite to this end, that whatſoever is contrary to them, Rebellion, Tumult, and Sedition, immediately tend unto deſtruction: which is the reaſon why God hath charged and required obedience to the Magiſtrate in ſuch expreſs and explicite language, and under a moſt ſevere penalty. So hath he done, *Rom.*

13. 1, 2. *Let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers, for there is no Power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* But this is a duty that I need not perſwade in this Audience.

All I have further to add is this, that while we return our thanks to God for reſtoring our Prince, and Laws, and Government, we do not omit the like for the Peace we now enjoy under them, while all our Neighbours are in war.

We dwell at home in our country, and ſleep ſecurely in our beds, while they are driven from place to place, and alarmed with daily fears and dangers.

We build, and plant, and adorn our houſes and habitations, while theirs are burnt and battered down, and lie in ruine and deſolation.

We ſow and reap, eat and drink in peace and plenty, and enjoy the fruits of our own labours, while others reap what they ſow, and the owners, it may be, ſtarve for want, and think it well to ſave their lives (which yet they cannot always do) with their loſs of all accommodations.

commodations. *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for theſe and all his mercies to us?* Let us love the Author of all our happineſs, let us demonſtrate that love by free and thankful obedience to him. Let us thus ſtudy peace with him, and let us alſo duly ſtudy the things that make for peace amongſt our ſelves. Let us heartily and really love one another: *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be put away from us, with all malice:* and, *Let us be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven us. Let us fear God, honour the King, not medling with them that are given to change.* So will that God, who hath wrought our deliverance, *ſtrengthen what he hath wrought for us.*

To him, &c.

The

The Third Sermon.

Philip. 1. 27, 28.

That ye ſtand faſt in one Spirit with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel; And in nothing terrified by your Adverſaries.

THere were two ſorts of bitter Enemies that oppoſed themſelves to Chriſtianity in the primitive Ages of the Goſpel; the former were the *Idolatrous Gentiles*, in whoſe hands the Secular Government then remained. The latter were thoſe of the *Jewiſh Religion*, who had toleration amongſt the Gentiles. Both which, though differing each with other, did yet conſpire and agree in this, to extinguiſh and root out Chriſtianity. The former, becauſe that thisReligion did as well demonſtrate the Gods they worſhipped to be no Gods (but Devils, or Beaſts, or dead Mens Souls,Images,and inanimate Creatures) as the worſhip it ſelf to be vain and barbarous. The latter, becauſe it diſannulled the temporary Rites of *Moſes* his Law, much more the many Superſtitions, which themſelves had added thereunto.

unto. Upon this account the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, being now in bonds, writes this Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, whom he had converted to Chriſtianity, not only further to inculcate what he had before delivered to them, but alſo to fortifie and prepare them againſt ſuch ſufferings and perſecutions, as their Religion drew upon them. He lets them know, that he himſelf was now a Priſoner for the Goſpel, that he was ſo far from being terrified either by his bonds, or death it ſelf, that were it not for their ſakes, to whom his life might be more uſeful, he ſhould rather *deſire to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt*. He further acquaints them with his deſign to viſit them again, in order to their ſupport and ſettlement, if God ſhould reſcue him from his bonds. In the mean time, gives this admonition: *Only let your converſation be as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, that whether I come, and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs; that ye ſtand faſt in one Spirit with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel, and in nothing terrified by your Adverſaries. That ye ſtand faſt*, &c.

In which words you have an account, what are the moſt effectual means for any Church, which God hath bleſſed with

with the true Faith of Chriſtianity, ſtill to abide and continue in it. *Firmneſs of mind in every mans private belief of it, cloſe union amongſt themſelves, zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation, and courage againſt ſuch oppoſitions as others may poſſibly make againſt it.*

1. Firmneſs of mind in every Mans private belief of it, which is ſuggeſted in theſe words: *Stand faſt*, that is to ſay, as it there follows, *in the faith of the Goſpel.*

2. Union amongſt themſelves: *Stand faſt in one ſpirit with one mind.*

3. Zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation: *Stand faſt in one ſpirit with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel.*

4. Courage againſt ſuch oppoſitions as other perſons make againſt it: *And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries.*

Theſe are the methods which our Apoſtle here propounds for a Church to retain the true Faith, that is, to continue a true Church.

1. The firſt of which is firmneſs of mind in every Mans private belief of truth. For ſeeing that every particular Church is made up of particular Perſons;

ſons; ſo far as particular Members fail in the true Faith, ſo far is that Church, they are Members of, maimed and mutilated in its parts, and the whole in tendency to diſſolution.

Now ſeeing the firmneſs of belief depends upon clear and evident proof, I might here offer a demonſtration of the truth and excellency of Chriſtianity. But being this is neither ſo needful, nor yet ſo ſeaſonable to the occaſion of our meeting, I ſhall rather chuſe to addreſs my ſelf to what the occaſion now requires, which is, to ſhew the truth and excellence of Chriſtianity, as it is profeſſed in our own Church in oppoſition to that of *Rome*: which I ſhall do, by comparing theirs and ours together in point of *Faith*, and *Worſhip*, and *Manners*.

1. And firſt of all, for matter of Faith, we firmly believe the holy Scriptures, and every thing therein contained, to be the infallible Word of God. We believe the Scriptures do contain all things neceſſary to Salvation, according as St. *John* aſſures us: *Joh.* 20. 31. *Theſe things are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.* Which we could not have, if every thing neceſſary to Salvation was

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not written, was not contained in this very Goſpel of St. *John*. Nay further yet, we believe and receive all Creeds that were ever received in the Catholick Church. Theſe Creeds are taken into our Liturgy, they are repeated in our Churches, we ſignifie our aſſent to them by ſtanding up when they are repeated, and are we ſtill to be judged Hereticks, and deficient in the Catholick Faith?

On the other hand; the Roman Church deny the Scriptures to be a compleat Rule of Faith, they build their faith upon Tradition, a thing uncertain. They rely upon Councils, which may erre; nay upon ſuch as have groſly erred. They vary as well from the Primitive Church in many caſes, as from the holy Scripture it ſelf. And laſt of all, they pretend a power of making new Articles of Faith, that is, ſuch as were not made by our Bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles; which being ſo, let reaſon judge, whether they or we be likelieſt to erre in point of Faith.

2. For matter of Worſhip (in the ſecond place) their publick Prayers are made and uſed in a Tongue unknown unto the People; ours in a Tongue which we all underſtand. And here let St. *Paul* decide the controverſie that is between

tween us, 1 *Cor.* 14, 15, 16, &c. *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with underſtanding alſo. I will ſing with the ſpirit, and I will ſing with underſtanding alſo. Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay Amen at thy giving thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt? For thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not edified.* From whence it appears what edification may be expected from their Prayers, that is to ſay, none at all. And therefore the Apoſtle further adds, *I thank God, I ſpeak with tongues more than you all; yet in the Church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that by my voice I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.*

But to proceed: As we make our Prayers in a known tongue, ſo in them we invoke the true God, and him only. We uſe no other Mediator, no other Patron but only Chriſt, whom God hath appointed ſo to be. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus,* 1 Tim. 2. 5. But they that are of the Church of *Rome*, make their addreſſes to Saints and Angels, as well for patronage and protection, as for their prayers to God for

for them; and ſome of thoſe (the Virgin *Mary*) do they invoke in as magnificent and high a ſtile, as they invoke God himſelf.

We pay no worſhip to any Images, ſeeing that God hath expreſly ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any graven image, nor the likeneſs of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the water under the Earth, thou ſhalt not bow down to them, nor worſhip them.* But they bow down and proſtrate themſelves before the Images of Chriſt, and others. And though they affirm that the honour they give unto the Image paſſes through it to the perſon, whom it repreſents; yet ſtill they acknowledge they worſhip the Image, that this, at leaſt, is a tranſient object of their Worſhip.

And then again, we give the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unto the People as well as the Prieſts in both kinds. So it was inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf, ſo it was given all along for many Ages: but they, in perfect contradiction to the Inſtitution of our Lord, deny the Cup unto the Laity.

We believe that after Conſecration the Bread and Wine ſet apart and conſecrated for the Sacrament, do ſtill retain

tain the natural ſubſtance of bread and wine. And ſo the Apoſtle himſelf believed, when he ſtiled that bread, of which we partake in that Sacrament, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. *We are all partakers of that one bread*; and that the Cup, of which we drink; and thus believing, we do not give Divine worſhip unto the Elements in the Sacrament. But they, in abſolute contradiction both unto Scripture, and unto Reaſon, and unto four of their five Senſes, believe that after Conſecration there is no bread, but the natural fleſh of Chriſt's body; no wine, but his very natural blood. Upon which account they pay a Divine worſhip to them, worſhip that which is not God, that which is really bread and wine.

To all theſe things I might now add the Superſtition of their Devotions, their Prayers for delivering departed Souls out of that place they call Purgatory, a place that is of their own making, for gaining Wealth unto their Church. Their Pilgrimages to the Tombs of Saints, an infinite Maſs of Rites and Ceremonies, for which things they have no precept in the Scripture, no example either there, or in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity; Rites which obſcure and burden Religion with a num-

berleſs heap of Superſtitions, contrary to the very nature, to the ſimplicity of Chriſtianity.

From matter of Worſhip, paſs we on to matter of common life and action.

1. As it relates to Moral Duty.
2. And alſo unto Civil Society.

1. And for the former, our Church declares that true Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary to gain the remiſſion and pardon of ſin. We alſo affirm that reformation is the beſt and moſt eſſential part of true repentance. We do not pretend to any power to give Abſolution to any perſon, who doth not practiſe ſuch repentance; that is to ſay, who doth not truly reform himſelf in life and action, in caſe life be continued to him; or in real purpoſe and reſolution, in an effectual change of heart. We make no pretence to an Authority of giving Indulgences and Remiſſions, or of admitting any Penances and Commutations for the Expiation of the Sin, where the Sin is ſtill continued in. Whereas they of the Church of *Rome* give Abſolution to Attrition, that is, to the meer fear of Hell; and theſe two things, namely *Attrition* and *Abſolution*, they judge ſufficient to Salvation. They admit of Penances and Commutations for

for the Expiation of Mens Sins, and by theſe means teach their Followers to hope for remiſſion of the puniſhment, although they retain the ſin it ſelf. And leſt the Penance ſhould ſeem burthenſom and too ſevere, they can give Indulgence for that too, to them that will be at the coſt to buy it. By all which means they make the Precepts of the Goſpel, the Laws of Chriſt, of no effect, make it needleſs to obey them, unleſs a man have a mind unto it, and to do more than what is needful.

2. For Civil Society, 'tis well known how many there are in the Church of *Rome*, who do affirm that it is not needful to diſcharge a promiſe to a Heretick; and all are Hereticks in their Account, who make profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and do not communicate with their Church. We know there was ſafe conduct promiſed to *John Hus* and *Jerom* of *Prague* to the Council of *Conſtance*, and how that promiſe was performed. The promiſe was broken, and the men burnt, and ſo indeed they juſtified their Doctrine by their practice.

They exempt the Clergy from the Authority of Secular Power, 'till they be ſurrendred thereunto by their Superiors in the Church, and they ſurrender them

when they pleaſe; and when they pleaſe, they do not. Upon which account many Villanies, many Murders have been committed in the State, to the infinite ſcandal of Religion. It was complained in the ſixth year of King *Henry* the Second, that there have been above an hundred Man-ſlaughters committed by the then Clergy ſince the beginning of his Reign.

But that which is of the vileſt conſequence in this point is, that they affirm that the Popes of *Rome* have power to depoſe Kings and Princes, and that purſuant to this Doctrine, they have excommunicated and depoſed lawful Princes in ſeveral places, and given their Kingdoms and Dominions to other perſons: That there are infinite numbers of Authors, who defend and juſtifie this Doctrine: That theſe are countenanced by a Council (that is to ſay, the fourth *Lateran*) which they themſelves call a General Council. For it is there expreſly ſaid, that in caſe a Prince does not purge his Country from heretical pravity in the ſpace of a year, after admonition ſo to do by the Metropolitan and his Comprovincials, then this be ſignified to the Pope, that he may deprive him of all Authority, *& terram ejus expo-*

exponat Catholicis occupandam, expoſe his Country to be poſſeſſed and ſeized by Catholicks. In direct purſuance of which Doctrine, private perſons have ſtab'd Princes, and have been commended and applauded by the Pope himſelf for ſo doing. For ſo it was in the caſe of *Henry* the Third of *France*.

Theſe are the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, relating unto Civil Society; what ours are, I need not ſay. We own our ſelves obliged to do good to all men; and that although we have not obliged our ſelves thereto by any particular promiſe to them; much more to diſcharge our faith to all. We own the King to be ſupreme in his own Dominions, and that there is no power in any to depoſe him. And to conclude, we own the truth of St. *Peter*'s words, and that in the very fulleſt ſenſe. *Honour* (or as the margent reads it) *eſteem all men, love the Brotherhood, fear God; honour the King*, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *We own all to be oblig'd to ſubmit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as ſupreme, or to Governours as ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil doers.*

I have here given you an account of ſome of the moſt material diffe-

rences between us and the Church of *Rome* in point of *faith* and *worſhip*, and *manners*, and ſhould now perſuade you to ſtand faſt in all theſe things as they are taught in this Church, not ſuffering your ſelves to be abuſed by vain Sophiſtry of deceivers. If they ask you where our Church was before *Luther*? ask you again, where theirs was before the fourth *Laterane* Council, nay before that of *Trent* it ſelf? For ſure it is there was never any Church before thoſe Councils, that did in all things teach and practiſe, as the Church of *Rome* at this preſent time. Tell them, our Church, that is, a Church, wherein the ſame Faith, and Worſhip, the ſame obedience to God's Commands, were taught and required, which are now taught and required in ours, was many ages before theirs. Such a Church there was as ſoon as there was a Chriſtian Church, ſuch a Church planted by Chriſt himſelf, ſuch a Church propagated by his Apoſtles, ſuch a Church for ſeveral hundred years, for ſeveral ages after that.

Afterwards there aroſe a time of darkneſs upon the face of the Chriſtian world, in that darkneſs many errours crept into the Church, many corruptions in worſhip, and manners; then was our Church

Church depraved and corrupted, as theirs now is: But now is our Church by God's grace reformed and reſtored to primitive purity; which theirs is not.

Whether theirs or ours be the better Church in point of Faith, may be eaſily known by this inſtance, we make the Scripture the rule of Faith, and this is a moſt unerring rule; they add tradition unto Scripture, and this is greatly expoſed to Errour; we have added nothing as abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, to the Faith contained in the ancient Creeds of the Catholick Church; they have added much to thoſe Creeds, they have added ſome ſuch things to them, as do by conſequence overthrow ſome parts of the very Creeds themſelves. Whether theirs or ours be the ſafer Church for a man to hope for Salvation in, may eaſily appear from theſe particulars. We teach ſuch Worſhip, ſuch Practice, as are moſt clearly and fully lawful, lawful beyond all peradventure, for ſure it is undoubtedly lawful for a man to worſhip the true God, to uſe no Image in his worſhip, to uſe him as Mediator whom he hath appointed ſo to be. It is lawful beyond all peradventure to have our Prayers in a known tongue, to give the

communion unto the Laity in both kinds, to reform, as well as confeſs our ſins, to uſe no art or commutations for the expiation of our ſins, but to forſake the ſins themſelves. Theſe things are lawful without all doubt, but that the contrary to theſe are lawful, is the doubtfuleſt thing in all the world, or rather to ſpeak more properly, it is moſt certain, they are not lawful. And therefore I leave it to you to judge, whether communion with our Church, or the Church of *Rome*, be the ſafer way unto Salvation, and if you judge, as I know you muſt, ſtand faſt in the Faith you have received, and the Church wherein you were baptized. And ſo much may ſerve for the firſt method for a true Church to preſerve it ſelf in the true Faith, firmneſs of mind in every mans private belief of it.

2. Proceed we now unto the ſecond, and that is Union amongſt themſelves, as it is ſuggeſted in theſe words, *ſtand faſt in one ſpirit with one mind. If a kingdom be divided againſt it ſelf, that kingdom cannot ſtand. If a houſe be divided againſt it ſelf, that houſe cannot ſtand*, Mark 3. 23, 24. Neither can a Church, which is ſo divided; If the members of the natural body be rent and torn each

each from other, this is the deſtruction of the whole, and death to every ſingle part. Diſunion doth of its own nature naturally tend to diſſolution, there needs no Enemy from abroad to deſtroy and ruin ſuch a Church, as is divided againſt it ſelf, the mutual diſcords that are within, the diviſions amongſt its own members, their mutual envyings, and animoſities, that naturally ariſe out of theſe diviſions, effectually tend to ſeparation, and ſeparation to diſſolution. Beſides the inteſtine ſtriſes and diviſions, which are ſeen and obſerved in any Church invite its Enemies to attempt its utter ruine and deſtruction, they open a breach for them to enter, they give free and an eaſie entrance to ſwarms of Seducers to invade it, they give a plauſible and fair pretence for a very plauſible and ſpecious objection; you have no union amongſt your ſelves; from whence it appears you have not the truth, *Truth* is one, and ſo is the *Faith* that's built upon it. You are not one amongſt your ſelves, and therefore you have not the true Faith. Now therefore leave and quit that Church which hath no unity in its members, and come to that which is united. To theſe aſſaults (and theſe are dangerous

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to weaker minds) doth every Church expoſe it ſelf, which is not at unity in it ſelf.

Now therefore let us be moſt cautious to be at union amongſt our ſelves; and in order to ſo good an end, let us take care to make our breaches no wider than indeed they are. We do agree, exactly agree amongſt our ſelves in point of faith, in the belief of all thoſe Doctrines, that are abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; thus far we agree with the Proteſtant Churches that are abroad, and further yet, with the generality of the Diſſenters that are at home. And as for this Church it ſelf, there is as great, and greater conſent in all the parts and members of it, than in the Church of *Rome* it ſelf. They have diviſions amongſt themſelves, and greater than any amongſt us. They charge either other, in ſome points, with nothing leſs than Hereſie it ſelf. We have no ſuch charges amongſt us. They have their Dominicans, and Franciſcans, they have their Moliniſts, and their Janſeniſts, one Order bandying againſt another with bitter diſcords and animoſities. They are not agreed in the very rule of faith it ſelf, ſome make the Decrees of the Pope only,

ly, ſome the Decrees of a General Council, others the Decrees of the Pope and Council both together, to be the only rule of Faith; from whence it moſt inevitably follows that that muſt be Faith unto one party, which is not ſo unto another. Seeing ſome things have been decreed by Popes, that have not been decreed by Councils, ſome things by Councils, and not by Popes. From whence it appears, that after all the boaſts we hear of union in the Church of *Rome*; there is in truth leſs of union in that Church, than in this that we are members of.

And for the increaſe and preſervation of this ſo bleſſed and needful thing, let us take care not to advance any private opinions in oppoſition to publick wiſdom. Let us not inſiſt upon any Doctrines as abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation which the Church hath not propoſed as ſuch. Let no particular ſort of men preſume to ſtile themſelves the Church, or the only genuine Sons of it, in oppoſition unto others, who believe the Doctrines of the Church, who have promiſed due Conformity to it, and evidently practiſe what they promiſe. Theſe in truth are the ſure and genuine Sons of the Church who go ſo far as

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the Church requires, and content themſelves to go no further. And if any deny them ſo to be; they have private fancys of their own, and by obtruding theſe on others, and cenſuring thoſe that receive them not, they weaken the Church, diſturb its union, diſquiet its peace, and take a courſe to bring a dangerous Schiſm into it.

Now therefore let it be our care to maintain Charity, to cheriſh Peace, to ſtudy Union amongſt our ſelves. And this is the ſecond of theſe methods which powerfully tend to our preſervation, and of the Faith which we do profeſs.

3. The third is ſingular zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation. For ſo the Apoſtle farther adds: *Stand faſt in one Spirit with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel.* There muſt be zeal, there muſt be endeavour, there muſt be joynt endeavour uſed for the promotion of this end.

1. Our enemies have a zeal againſt it, and if we our ſelves have none for it, how can we hope that we ſhall preſerve it, unleſs there be zeal appoſed to zeal, unleſs we be concerned for truth, as they concern themſelves againſt it, can we reaſonably judge we can ſecure it?

No

No, if they find that we our ſelves are cold and indifferent in our Religion, that we ſhew no hearty affection for it, that we value our eaſe, love our pleaſure, eſteem the ſmalleſt concerns and intereſt more than we prize and value that, may they nor then juſtly conclude that we ſhall eaſily part with it? And will not this excite their diligence, and encourage attempts to take it from us? May I ſpeak what I verily think is true? It is our indifference in our Religion, the groſs neglects that very many, and the foul contempts that ſome others have clearly ſhewed unto this profeſſion, that hath given encouragement to our enemies to deſign and attempt its extirpation. If they can ſay (and I wiſh they may not) they have no concernment for their Religion, they have no regard for the Miniſters of it, they neglect, they deſpiſe it in life and practice, many of them very ſeldom appear in their publick Aſſemblies and Congregations, very few frequent that holy Sacrament, which is the great and ſolemn profeſſion of joyning in Communion with it. They give no evidence of any zeal or affection to it, and therefore, no doubt, they will part with it upon very cheap and eaſie terms; bring their

their Eſtates, or eaſe and ſafety, bring the advantages of this world into a competition with it, and there is no doubt but they will abandon and quit the one, that they may quietly enjoy the other. They will rather chuſe to enjoy their Eſtates, eaſe, and ſafety without their Religion, than their Religion without theſe. If we would penetrate into the hearts of thoſe that deſign the extirpation of our Religion, I fear we ſhould find theſe thoughts in them, and that theſe have incouraged that deſign? which cannot otherwiſe be reſiſted, than by letting them know they are deceived, that we have as great and warm a zeal for the preſerving our Religion, as they for its ruine and deſtruction.

2. To this zeal we muſt add endeavour, it is not the goodneſs of a cauſe that is ſufficient to defend it. If it be true, and juſt, and reaſonable, it muſt be evidenced ſo to be, and endeavour uſed for its defence. if it be true, it is ſo much fitter to be pleaded. If it be juſt, it is juſt to appear, and labour for it, it doth ſtill ſo much the more deſerve the uſe of reaſon in every private Profeſſor of it, the uſe of Authority in every Magiſtrate for its advancement and preſervation. The wiſeſt Laws will

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not ſecure the beſt Religion, if they themſelves be not ſecured. They can neither plead, nor execute themſelves. They rather excite contempt and ſcorn, and irritate Enemies to oppoſition, where they are left to ſhift for themſelves, without any countenance from the Magiſtrate.

Now therefore it would ſtill retain the Reformed Religion; reformed I ſay, by the bleſſing of God upon the pains of our Forefathers, and at the expence of the very blood of many of them, if we deſire to deliver it down to our poſterity, as they tranſmitted it unto us; we muſt upon every fair occaſion profeſs our hearty belief of it, profeſs our zeal for its defence; maintain its truth againſt oppoſers, give no occaſion to them to think, that fraud or force, hopes or fears, rewards or puniſhments in this world ſhall ever chaſe or remove us from it.

And may not the diligence of our enemies, for the ſubverſion of our Faith, awake our minds, excite our diligence to maintain it? If they inſinuate and intrude into all Societies, all places, all degrees and ranks of Men, and uſe the utmoſt of their skill to ſeduce them, and impoſe upon them, to move them, both by

by hopes and fears, to embrace their errours and deluſions; ſhall we be idle, or remiſs in the mean time in the ſecuring of real truth? Have they ſo much of zeal and fervor for meer vanities and ſuperſtitions? And have we none for real piety? Are they ſo active, as that they compaſs Sea and Land to make men Proſelytes unto them. And have we no care to ſecure our ſelves, at leaſt at home? Do they neglect no opportunity, do they omit no endeavours, no not the fouleſt and moſt unlawful, to promote and propagate their Religion? And are we aſleep, are we in a maze, are we in a dream, while we ſhould defend and ſecure ours?

Awake we then from that ſecurity, and from that coldneſs and indifference, from that remiſneſs and neglect, which gives encouragement to our enemies to attempt the deſtruction of our Religion, and may (if not in time reformed) exceeding juſtly provoke God to deliver us up into their hands.

3 Let us all awake while it is day, and unite our ſelves in joynt endeavours (the third particular I propoſed) to defend and propagate our Religion. Let us joyn together in the clear and open profeſſion of it. Let us conſtantly attend

tend the Worſhip of God in the publick Aſſemblies, where the Religion is profeſſed. Let us frequently joyn in the Celebration of that holy Sacrament, which is not only a Communion with Chriſt our Head, but the apteſt and cleareſt ſignification of our Communion each with other. Let us mutually counſel and adviſe; let us encourage one another to retain and hold faſt that Faith, *which was once delivered to the Saints, ſtriving for the faith of the Goſpel, and in nothing terrified by our Adverſaries.*

4. Which is the fourth of theſe methods which our Apoſtle here propounds for the defence of the true faith, and ſo is that which we profeſs.

Our Faith is that which our bleſſed Lord came down from Heaven to reveal to men, he confirm'd it by many mighty Miracles, he died on the Croſs, he roſe again, he aſcended to Heaven, he gave the Spirit to his Apoſtles and holy Followers to preach and propagate it in the world. Theſe and ſeveral after them for divers Ages laid down their lives for its defence, and made it Victorious in the world, notwithſtanding all the oppoſitions that the powers of the world, and the luſts of men made againſt it;

and why ſhould we fear the wit or malice, the craft or ſtrength that any Enemies can uſe againſt it? if we will be faithful our ſelves to it. We can at moſt but die for it. And have we not reaſon to encourage us ſo to do, if ever the times (which God forbid) ſhould call for that? What ſaith our Lord in this caſe? *Luk.* 12. 4, 5. *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear; fear him. who, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell; yea I ſay unto you fear him,* Fear God, and nothing but God only. Fear him, and you ſhall not need to fear any other thing but him only. He can diſcover the darkeſt Plots, he can defeat the greateſt craft, he can diſarm the greateſt Powers, and ſcatter them all into confuſion.

And we are not without very good hopes that he will concern himſelf for us, and imploy his Providence for our help.

We have a Cauſe that God hath favoured, wonderfully favoured in former times. How many Plots againſt this Cauſe did he diſcover, confound, and puniſh, during the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*? How did he do the like again, when

when her Succeſſor began his Reign? How hath he ſtill preſerved and bleſſed it in many confuſions, many diviſions amongſt our ſelves ſince that time? How hath he now at the preſent time wonderfully diſcovered the works of darkneſs, brought hidden and ſecret evils to light? Made thoſe diſcoveries, done thoſe things that we could never have done for our ſelves?

God will never be wanting to us, or to the Religion we profeſs, if we our ſelves be not wanting to it. Let us therefore awaken all our powers to diligence in our own defence, and then commit our cauſe to God, making our daily Prayers to him, that he would defend his own Truth, that he would protect his own Inheritance, and water the Vine that himſelf hath planted.

Yea, let us make our appeals to him, whether we or our Enemies be in the right.

And then, O God, who art a juſt and righteous God, take the matter into thine own hand, do thou judge between them and us. Pardon our ſins, forgive thoſe evils which may provoke thine indignation againſt us; but for our cauſe, for that Faith that we do profeſs againſt our Enemies, that we freely

leave to thee, we do appeal unto thy judgment, and are willing to ſtand or fall by it.

Let us therefore adorn it in our lives, this is the firſt and principal way of procuring the bleſſing of God upon it. Let us ſeek and improve all occaſions to gain it credit and reputation. And ſeeing that it hath pleaſed the King to recommend the rebuilding of St. *Pauls* unto our Charity at this time, and himſelf to ſet us a great Example; let us not be wanting to this Work, according unto our proportion.

It is certainly a Work of Chriſtian Piety to build up places for God's Worſhip. No ſooner were the Chriſtians freed from the Perſecutions of the Heathen, but they did zealouſly apply themſelves to this work, and raiſed magnificent and noble Structures for the publick places of God's Worſhip.

This Church, which is now to be rebuilt, may be ſtiled the Chief of all the Nation. It hath formerly been its greateſt glory in its kind, and we hope it may be ſo again. What pity were it that ſuch a Work ſhould fail or flag at ſuch a time, when we are to give eſpecial evidence of a publick Spirit, of Free, and Noble, and Generous Minds. The time

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is an extraordinary time, the work an extraordinary work. Let us open our hands to a more than ordinary bounty towards it.

And as for us in this place, we have ſingular reaſon ſo to do; ſeeing it pleaſed Almighty God to preſerve our Churches and Habitations from thoſe flames that devoured our Neighbours. Now therefore let us as this time honour the Religion we do profeſs by this particular work of piety, as well as in all other inſtances; making our prayers to Almighty God, that he would defend his own Truth, that he would protect his own Inheritance, and preſerve the Religion himſelf planted.

And thou, O God, &c.

The Fourth Sermon.

MATTH. 6. 23.

——If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?

THE great ſecurity of man's life as well from the cheats of his own luſts, as from the temptations of the world, depends upon true and ſtable Principles of Faith and Piety. And the ground of all theſe Principles is, a true judgment of what is happineſs, what is the great end of life, and what are the ways that lead unto it, and a choice ſuitable thereunto. This is the thing which our Lord ſuggeſts, 19, 20, 21 *verſes. Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal: but lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal, for ſays he, where your treaſure is, there will your heart*

heart be alſo: that is to ſay, that which you chuſe to be your happineſs, that will you place your hearts upon, and purſue in all your deliberate actions. Having thus exhorted us to take care to chuſe that for our chief good, which is indeed really ſo, to conduct our lives by true Principles, he ſpeaks a Parable wherein he ſhews the great advantage of ſo doing, and the danger of doing otherwiſe. The former of theſe in thoſe words, *verſ.* 22. *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body is full of light.* The application of which words is this: The judgment of the mind is the guide of life. Wherefore if the judgment be true and good, the life hath a true guide to rule it. And then the danger of a falſe judgment is declared in the words that immediately follow: *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkneſs.* And ſo he comes to the words of the Text: *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?* that is, if thy judgment be corrupt, if thy mind and conſcience be erroneous, how great and dangerous are thoſe miſtakes which thou art then expoſed unto?

Now that which the words thus explained offer unto our conſideration, is

the mighty danger that they are in to loſe their ſouls, who are led and govern'd by falſe Principles. Which will appear, if we conſider that ſuch Principles,

1. Leave them dangerouſly expoſed to ſin.

2. And not only ſo expoſed unto it, but that they alſo encourage to it. I ſay,

1. They leave them dangerouſly expoſed to evil: which will be very clear and manifeſt, if we conſider,

1. Firſt of all, that our preſent condition and ſtate is ſuch, that we are under many temptations thereunto.

2. That the nature of man is apt of it ſelf to cloſe and comply with thoſe temptations.

3. That we have nothing elſe, ſave only true and right Principles, aſſiſted by the Grace of God, to prevent and hinder complying with them.

4. From whence it moſt inevitably follows, that where thoſe Principles are not found, we are moſt dangerouſly expoſed to evil.

1. I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, which is, that our preſent condition is ſuch, that we are under many temptations unto evil.

The world is full of deceits and ſnares: where-

where-ever we tread we are in danger to fall into them. There is no buſineſs, no imployment, no condition or ſtate of life, but lies expoſed unto temptation. Sometimes we are courted by ſenſual charms, by the hopes of favour, or wealth, or honour, to part with our innocence and integrity; ſometimes we are in great danger to have it extorted and wreſted from us by the dreads and dangers of the world. Sometimes an occaſion is offered to men to oppreſs or to defraud their neighbour, and by theſe means to gain Eſtates, and heap up abundance of wealth and riches. And there are the like occaſions alſo of gaining eſteem, applauſe, and honour, of gaining them by unlawful means; and yet are theſe, and in theſe circumſtances, no ſmall temptation unto many. And as for ſenſual ſatisfactions, I need not ſay what great temptations they are to many; how they infatuate? how they bewitch the minds of men in ſtrange forgetfulneſs of themſelves, and of the accounts they muſt make to God in the world to come.

Add hereunto the great provocations unto evil, men often offer each to other, and that not only by ill example, but by many other ways alſo. Who is he that

that lives without an enemy? and what will not an enemy do to blacken the Name, to injure the Eſtate, to blaſt the Fortune of him he hates? And ſhall I need to ſay, how far ſuch injuries and affronts are apt to prevail with moſt men to anger, and malice, and animoſity? And what a dangerous thing is it to admit and entertain theſe paſſions? Of that, St. *Paul* hath ſaid enough, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. *Be angry and ſin not, let not the ſun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil.* Which puts us in mind of another Tempter, who is moſt buſie, and moſt ſubtle in making all the other temptations we meet with-al operative and effectual upon us by his deluſions and ſeductions. *For he walketh about as a roaring Lyon ſeeking whom he may devour.*

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that as we are under many temptations in this world: ſo are our natures of themſelves apt to comply with theſe temptations. They are too ready to gather fire from every ſpark, to find occaſion of doing evil, or luſting after it in the very leaſt ſuggeſtion to it. What will not thoſe that love the World readily undertake and act, when an opportunity of gaining wealth freely offers it ſelf

ſelf unto them? *They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.* And how many are there that fix this Principle in their minds, and govern all their deſigns by it, that they will be rich, however it be they gain their end?

I need not ſay, how great a temptation ſenſual pleaſures are to others, nor how far others are inclined to popular fame and reputation; how proud, and ſtomachful, and ambitious, and how they ſwell with rage and anger, with envy, and malice, and animoſity, when they are oppoſed and contradicted. I need not trouble my ſelf to prove, that the nature of man is much corrupted, ſtrangely degenerate and decayed. What are all the Hiſtories of the World, but a Record, for the moſt part of the corruption of humane Nature, of Wars and Tumults, fraud and falſeneſs, oppreſſion and cruelty, as an effect of thoſe corruptions: inſomuch that the wiſe and learned *Solomon* after all his experience and obſervation of the ways and manners of mankind, gives us his judgment in this concluſion, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *Lo, this only have I learn'd, that God hath made man upright, but they have ſought*

ſought out many inventions. So God made man at the firſt, but they have much corrupted themſelves, and greatly depraved and abuſed their nature.

3. Theſe things being ſo, that we are under many temptations unto evil, that humane nature is of it ſelf apt to comply with theſe temptations: hence it appears in the third place, that we have nothing but good Principles, aſſiſted by the Grace of God, to ſecure and to deliver us from them. Suppoſe an occaſion and opportunity to do an evil preſented and offered unto a man, ſuppoſe the nature of this perſon does of it ſelf move and incline him thereunto, that it be a ſingular gratification to ſome predominant luſt in him. Is it imaginable that this perſon ſhould refuſe to comply with this temptation, if he have no firm and ſtable Principles fixed and ſetled in his mind to prevent and hinder that compliance? If he be not firſt perſuaded fully, that the thing is unlawful he is about, that it will involve him in great guilt, that this will expoſe him to Gods diſpleaſure, and the ſevere effects thereof? If he be not poſſeſt with theſe Principles, what ſhould ſecure him from that ſin? Will the ſenſual perſon deny himſelf the delights and pleaſures of ſenſuality;

ſuality; or he that inordinately loves the world, refuſe the occaſions and opportunities of all unlawful gains and intereſts; or the proud, and envious, and malicious let ſlip the advantages that are offer'd him, to revenge himſelf, and hurt his Neighbour, while he hath no principles and rules of life to reſiſt and oppoſe theſe temptations, and his own inclinations to cloſe with them? Suppoſe him deſtitute of ſuch Principles, of ſtedfaſt purpoſe and reſolution never to vary from God's will to ſerve and gratifie his own luſts, never to loſe eternal Glory to poſſeſs the advantages, enjoy the pleaſures of this world; and he is left as a naked man againſt the weapons of his enemy, and in no capacity to make reſiſtance.

No ſooner were the Gentile World for the violation of natural light abandoned by God unto themſelves, and left to the government of their luſts, without the guidance of good Principles, but that they fell into moſt prodigious and horrid evils, as you may ſee it at large deſcribed in the firſt Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*. They fell into all degrees of evil, they perſiſted and continued in them without the leaſt remorſe of mind.

And

And when the Jews by their traditions corrupted the ſacred word of God, when they miſtook the rules of life, they alſo degenerated like the Gentiles, they were as blind in their ſupiſtitions, as the other were in their Idolatries.

Add hereunto that we are ſo far from being ſecure from the greateſt evils without the fierceſt and ſtrongeſt Principles of hearty obedience unto God, that we find it difficult for thoſe Principles, to retain and hold us in obedience. Men know evil, and yet they do it; underſtand their duties, yet neglect them. They forſake and omit what they approve, they chuſe and practiſe what they believe, and know is evil. They reſiſt the light, they violate Conſcience, they offer violence to their Principles; and while temptations are ſo ſtrong, and natural deſires ſo ill inclined, as to lead them Captive unto evil, againſt the convictons of their minds, againſt their Pirnciples, and Reſolutions; how much more muſt the ſame things, have the ſame and worſe effects upon them, where they have no Principles to oppoſe to their temptations they meet withal, and their own depraved, and corrupt affections.

The

The ſumm of all I have ſaid is this: That we are under many temptations unto evil, that humane nature is of it ſelf, apt to comply with thoſe temptations, that we have nothing but good Principles to prevent and hinder ſuch complyance. From whence it moſt inevitably follows, that where ſuch principles are not found, where men are under the power and guidance of evil Principles, they are moſt dangerouſly expoſed to evil. This is the leaſt of the ill effects, that we can poſſibly expect from them.

2. But then ſecondly, we muſt conſider, That as all ill principles in Religion leave us at leaſt expoſed to evil; ſo are there many do very highly encourage to it. There are ſuch principles to be found, as turn the greateſt crimes to merit, and make men hope for a reward, hope to gain eternal glory, by the fouleſt practices in the world; by thoſe that tend to eternal miſery. Our bleſſed Lord foretold his followers, that the time would come *wherein they would put them out of the Synagogues*, and not ſo only, *but alſo that whoſoever killed them ſhould think he did God ſervice* by it, *John* 16. 2. So did the Jews uſe his Diſciples. They firſt accuſed

accuſed them of Schiſm, and Hereſie, and then perſecuted them unto Death. And juſt ſo doth the Roman Church to all Chriſtians diſſenting from them. They pronounce them guilty of Schiſm, and Hereſie; they excommunicate them out of the Church, they flatly deny that they can be ſaved, they doom them all unto damnation; they Pronounce it lawful to deſtroy them, to deſtroy the very greateſt Princes when they have once judged them Hereticks. They make it a meritorious act in thoſe that adventure ſo to do; and leſt men ſhould not venture upon it, ſome of them teach that they are obliged, and bound to do it, *extremo animarum ſuarum periculo, ſi vires habeant ad hoc idoneas* (*Philopator*,) under the pain of the loſs of their Souls; if they have ſufficient ſtrength to do it. Could a man have thought that ſuch practices, as theſe are, ſhould ever have been undertaken by any, making profeſſion of Chriſtianity? could he have thought that although theſe ſhould be undertaken, they ſhould be juſtified and defended? nay urged, and preſſed with great ſeverity? under no leſs a tie, and penalty, than that of the loſs of a man's Soul? But this it is to have *the mind and conſcience defiled*, as the

the Apoſtle himſelf expreſſes it, *Tit.* 1. 15 This it is, as he ſpeaks elſewhere, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. *to have the Conſcience ſeared with a hot iron.* If a man's Principles be corrupt, his conſcience perverted and depraved, what will not ſuch a conſcience admit, and ſuch Principles urge upon him? *If the very light that is in him be darkneſs, how great then is that darkneſs?* And now to apply what I have ſaid upon this point.

1. Seeing the danger of falſe Principles in Religion is ſo prodigiouſly and ſtrangely great, let this be a mighty caution to us to avoid communion with ſuch perſons, as govern themſelves by ſuch Principles, and more eſpecially the Church of *Rome.*

It is not imaginable how this Church hath perverted the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and quite overthrown the practice of it in many conſiderable parts of it. There is ſcarce any one Command of God, which they have not clouded and perverted by ſome perverſe interpretations. And beſides all this they have formed and ſtated general Principles, which effectually lead to the overthrowing of all the Precepts of Chriſtianity. And ſome of theſe I ſhall inſtance in.

1. The firſt of theſe is the Doctrine

received in the *Roman* Church of acting according to probable opinions, received not only among the Jesuits, but by many others as well as them.

1. They teach, that although an opinion seems to be false to any man, considering the reasons that make against it, yet that it is a probable opinion, if it be maintained by two, or three, nay by one Doctor of note amongst them.

2. And then secondly, that any person may lawfully act and govern himself by such an opinion in point of practice, by an opinion maintained by others, although it seem to be false to himself; just contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, *Rom.* 14. 23. *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* The very Words they use are these: *Ex authoritate unius tantùm posse quem, illam in praxi amplecti, licèt a principiis intrinsecis falsam & improbabilem existimet*; that is, *That a man may lawfully follow an opinion in practice upon the authority of one Doctor, though he himself, considering the reasons of that opinion, judge it to be false and improbable.* (*Guimen. pag.* 55.) My Author adds an example to this, and that is, although a Confessor shall himself believe it to be unlawful to absolve a man in a certain case; yet that notwithstanding

withſtanding he may abſolve him, if others judge it to be lawful. Now here I obſerve in the firſt place, that this is directly againſt the Scripture, which pronounces that to be unlawful, which a man acts againſt his own mind and conſcience, although agreeably to other mens. And then ſecondly, that this opinion gives all men liberty to do whatſoever a few Doctors, nay any one of the *Roman* Church have judged lawful: And what is it, that ſome of them have not judged lawful, eſpecially againſt all thoſe perſons, upon whom they fix the name of Hereticks? And if you inquire, what is the deſign of thoſe perſons that do maintain this opinion, it is moſt evident, that it is this: That the ſpiritual Guides of the *Roman* Church may have a pretence to lead the people boldly to act what they require, although againſt the minds and judgments of them they lead. That is, in caſe a private perſon judge it unlawful to break his faith, to falſifie promiſe to a Heretick, or to deprive him of life, or fortunes or reputation; yet that he may ſtill lawfully do it, if two or three of their Guides and Teachers, nay if any one of them judge it lawful.

3. But then thirdly, they further teach, That where there are any two opinions, one leſs probable than another, that a man may lawfully guide his practice by that which appears to be leſs probable. So *Martial de Prado* concludes, and abundance of others as well as he, (as *Guimen. p.* 64.) *Sæpe in praxi licitum eſt ſequi opinionem minus probabilem, relictâ probabiliori: It is often lawful in matter of practice to follow a leſs probable opinion, forſaking that which is more probable.* Which is as much as if they ſaid, that a man is not bound to govern his life according to the beſt of his judgment, but may very lawfully do what is worſe, where he knows and believes he might do better. And is this for a man to guide his life according to the rules of Charity, or that integrity, that ſincerity, which true Chriſtianity requires from us?

4. And yet I muſt add what is ſtill worſe; for it is added upon this point in the Church of *Rome*, *That it is lawful for any perſon to follow a leſs probable opinion rather than one that is more probable, and that although the more probable be alſo ſafer than the other.* And for this, an Author of that Church cites the Teſtimonies of above forty of their Doctors,

ctors, (*Guimen. p.* 62, 64.) And is this to teach like true and faithful Guides of Souls? Is this for men to behave themſelves like faithful Paſtors? and careful of the Salvation of men, to give them licence to guide their lives by ſuch opinions, as are not only leſs probable, but leſs ſafe than the direct contrary are? But theſe are the Methods, theſe are the Arts of the *Roman* Church, to draw men in unto their Church; to allow them liberty to pleaſe themſelves, to do the things that are moſt pleaſing, though leaſt ſafe; to gratifie ſinful inclinations, though to the prejudice of their Souls. By theſe liberties they fill their Church with numerous Proſelytes and Diſciples, and gain Authority to themſelves to put them upon the fouleſt actions, by teaching them, that it is lawful for them to follow the Judgment of their Teachers, though it ſeems falſe unto themſelves; which is to rob every private perſon of his Conſcience, Reaſon, and Underſtanding, and to oblige them to follow others, who, as appears from theſe particulars, have nothing at all of conſcience in them.

2. Add hereunto another Principle, taught and maintained in the *Roman* Church, concerning the rectifying of

the intention, which is, that a man may lawfully do ſuch things as are materially evil, provided always that he direct the inward intention of his mind unto a good and an honeſt end. As for example, that a man may lawfully ſmite with a ſword, where he hath received a blow with the hand, and is ſecure from further prejudice, provided he do it *non ad ſumendam vindictam, ſed ad vitandam infeviam*, Guimen. *pag.* 199, 200. that is to ſay, *not for revenge, but to repair his reputation.* Or as Father *Eſcobar* hath expreſſed it (Letters Provincial, *p.* 143.) *One may lawfully kill another, who hath given him a box on the ear, though he run away for it, provided he do it not out of hatred or revenge.* In ſhort, that a man may do any evil to him that hath offered him an affront, in caſe he do it not out of malice, or to revenge himſelf upon him, but only to repair his credit, and defend his honour and reputation. But if this be true and Chriſtian Doctrine, what ſhall we ſay to the Precept of Chriſt, *Mat.* 5. 39. *I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other alſo.* That is to ſay, if any injury paſſed upon thee, leave thee ſecure of life and limbs, if it only touch thy reputation,

putation, as this is meaſured amongſt men by vulgar judgments and opinions, do thou patiently bear the injury, and be content to expect a reward hereafter for it, whatſoever becomes of thy reputation.

In the mean time let it be obſerved, how the Teachers in the Church of *Rome* looſen the reins to the luſts of men, indulge their vain unchriſtian humors, while they teach them to value their reputation, and that in the eyes of vulgar Judges, more than the very lives of men. While they allow them to preſerve the eſteem of vain men, by the ſpilling of their neighbours blood; as though his life were of leſs value than the opinion of ſuch perſons.

Two things further I ſhall obſerve: Firſt, That this Doctrine of good intention, juſtifying actions of this kind, is in effect no other than that, of *doing of evil that good may come*; or of the uſing of evil means for the attaining a good end. A Doctrine moſt ſeverely cenſured, *Rom.* 3. 8. And then further, that a good intention juſtifies an indifferent action, a thing that is lawful in it ſelf; but never juſtifies things unlawful. In theſe things it hath no place, but in indifferent things it hath.

Now then to conclude what I have to ſay, ſeeing evil Principles do not only leave us expoſed to ſin, but alſo encourage us thereunto, ſeeing they expoſe us to death eternal by ſo doing; let us have a care of ſuch perſons, and ſuch a Church as teach and promote ſuch Principles. Let us be ſtedfaſt in that Church where the ſaving Doctrine of Chriſtianity is faithfully taught and offered to us. We have no other certain helps againſt the moſt pernicious evils, to ſecure us from the fouleſt ſins, but firm Principles, Faith and Holineſs, aſſiſted by the Grace of God. Theſe are the things that muſt preſerve us againſt our natural inclinations, againſt our depraved and corrupt affections; theſe are the things that muſt ſecure us againſt the temptations of the world, and recover us, if we chance to fall through humane frailty and infirmity. He that commits a ſin by Principles, hath nothing to retrieve him from it, and to recover him from his fall, while ſuch a Principle remains in him. But he that falls through inadvertency, may be ſoon recovered by good Principles. He will remember he hath done amiſs, his conſcience will check and ſmite him for it; theſe checks will ſend him to his prayers,

to

to beg the pardon of what is paſt, and a greater vigilance, a greater aſſiſtance of God's Grace for time to come, and ſo recover him from his fall, and reſtore him to his former ſtation.

And therefore let it be our care to govern our lives by ſtable principles of integrity: In doubtful caſes let us always follow the ſafer part, and not do as they of the Church of *Rome*, forſake a ſafer to follow a more unſafe opinion. And where the caſe is plain and obvious, that it is unlawful to do a thing; let us not cheat our own reaſon with any deceitful arts and reaſonings, to make it ſeem to be lawful for us. If we do this, we expoſe our ſelves to the guile and Sophiſtry of our Luſts, and may make the plaineſt things obſcure. But if we heartily love the truth, and uſe no means to contradict it, it will be a faithful guide unto us in this life, and ſo conduct us to life eternal.

How many are there that are ſo far from believing Schiſm to be a ſin, that they value themſelves upon this account, and believe themſelves the only Saints, becauſe they ſeparate from the Church, make that a Character of Religion which tends to its ruine and deſtruction?

The

The Fifth Sermon.

Matth. 16. 18.

And the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

The whole Verſe is thus:

And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: And the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

ST. *Peter* having in the 16th *verſe* of this Chapter made this confeſſion of our Lord, That he was *Chriſt the Son of the living God*, is in return for this confeſſion firſt pronounced a bleſſed perſon, and then adorned with an excellent Character by our Saviour. He is pronounced a bleſſed perſon at the 17 *verſe*, *Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* He is adorned with an excellent Character in the words immediately

mediately following thoſe, *And I ſay unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church*; which priviledge, although it was not peculiar unto S. *Peter*, but common to the other Apoſtles with him, yet being firſt declared of him, adds to the Dignity of his Character, and yet detracts nothing at all from the power of the reſt of Chriſt's Apoſtles, upon whom, as upon a ſure foundation S. *Paul* aſſures us the Church was built, *Epheſ.* 2. 20. It was built on them together with him, whom our Saviour mentions in this place, it was moſt firmly built upon them, for ſo it appears from theſe words; *and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* For the better underſtanding of which words we muſt,

(1) Conſider that ἅδης, tranſlated *Hell* is frequently uſed in the holy Scriptures as well as prophane Authors to ſignifie the Grave, to denote the place, and ſtate of the dead; ſo it is uſed in theſe words, *Pſal.* 16. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy one to ſee corruption.* And then further,

(2) We muſt conſider, that the *grave*, or place and State of the dead is ſometimes compared unto a Houſe,

If

If I wait, the grave is mine houſe, Job. 17. 13. and to a houſe with gates, or doors ſhut up and locked with bars and locks, and hence that ſaying of *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 38. 10. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my days I ſhall go to the gates of the grave.* Hence mention is made of the *bars of the Pit*, Job 17. 16. and of the *keys of hell and death*, Revel. 1. 18. and of *the keys of the bottomleſs pit*, Revel. 9. 1.

(3.) Being then that the *grave*, being that the place and ſtate of the Dead is compared to a houſe with gates and doors, ſhut up and faſtned with bars and locks; from hence likewiſe it comes to paſs, that Death or Deſtruction is deſcribed by entring into the Gates of the grave; for ſo you find in the words which I have already cited, *Iſaiah* 38. 10, 11. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my days (when God told me that I ſhould dye) I ſhall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord in the land of the living; I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world*, where [entring into the gates of the grave] plainly ſignifies *death* it ſelf, or entring into the places of the dead, as all the other expreſſions ſhew.

(4.) This

(4.) This being ſo; if the *Church* be taken for God's people, not conſidered as a Society being together in Communion, but as ſingle Members of Chriſts Body; then theſe words that are before us, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*, imply no more, than that the Members of Chriſts body ſhall overcome death and the grave by a Reſurrection to Immortality. But then if the Church in this place be taken, as it uſually is, and as I judge it ought to be, for the general Society of Believers, conſidered as they are a Church, living together in Communion in the uſe of all Chriſt's Inſtitutions: then are the words we have in hand (which tell us, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*) a Promiſe that there ſhall be a Church profeſſing the true Faith of the Goſpel, and living in the uſe of its Inſtitutions, in viſible Fellowſhip and Communion, 'till the ſecond Coming of our Lord.

Then when it is ſaid, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*; the meaning will be, that the Church ſhall never enter into thoſe gates, which is as much as if it were ſaid, that it ſhould never be deſtroyed.

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Having thus interpreted the words before us, I ſhall proceed in this Method.

1. I ſhall ſhew what Church this is, which is deſigned in theſe words.

2. And then ſecondly, how far this promiſe of our Lord made to that Church in theſe words, ſecures it from errour and defection.

1. It is needful to underſtand what the Church is, which is deſigned in theſe words, where it is promiſed, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*

And the reaſon is, becauſe the Patrons of the *Roman Church* have aſſumed this promiſe unto themſelves with as much confidence and preſumption, as if it had been expreſly ſaid, That the Church of *Rome* ſhould never fail, but always continue firm and ſtable, nay abſolutely infallible in the Faith, in the true Doctrine of Chriſtianity; whereas in truth, this is as well a great arrogance as a moſt wide and foul miſtake.

For certain it is, that our Saviour here ſpeaks not of any particular Church planted in this or the other place, but only of the Univerſal Church, the whole Society of thoſe perſons who profeſs the Doctrine of the Goſpel. He ſpeaks *indefinitely* of his *Church*, *Upon this Rock will*

will I build my Church; and ſpeaking indefinitely of his Church, cannot poſſibly underſtand any particular part of it, the Church of any particular place, but the Catholick Univerſal Church.

The truth is, the Church of any particular place, ſeated in any particular Country, may utterly fail, and be extinguiſhed. How many great and excellent Churches have failed and periſhed long ago? How many others have ſo decayed, that they ſeem near unto deſtruction? Where are thoſe many famous Churches which once flouriſhed in the Coaſt of *Africk*? Where are thoſe ſeven Churches of *Aſia* largely mentioned by St. *John* in the three firſt Chapters of the *Revelations*? Where are thoſe many other Churches which formerly flouriſh'd in the Eaſt? How many of them are extinguiſhed? utterly ruined and deſtroyed with the very Cities where they were planted? How many others are decayed almoſt to a total diſſolution? Be it then concluded, that this promiſe, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*, belongs to the Church Univerſal only, and not to any Society of Chriſtians, ſeated in any particular place, not unto any particular Church. Which being

being ſo, I cannot diſmiſs this point without an Inference and a Caution.

1. The Inference is, That ſeeing this promiſe of our Lord, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church*, belongs to the Church Univerſal, and not to any particular Church. The conſequence which the Romaniſts draw from theſe words, namely, that *the Church of* Rome *is indefectible and infallible*, is moſt inconſequent and unreaſonable. This promiſe belongs to the whole Church, of which the preſent Church of *Rome* is but a part, and a part infected with ſtrange corruptions. This promiſe belongs to the Univerſal Church of Chriſt; the Church of *Rome* was never more than only a particular Church, that is, a member of the univerſal; and is now, what it hath long been, a moſt corrupt and unſound member. And as that Church hath ſtrangely ſunk into heatheniſh and barbarous Superſtitions, ſo may it utterly fail and vaniſh, and diſclaim the very name of Chriſt, and yet this promiſe of our Lord remain a firm and ſtable truth, That *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church.*

2. Seeing that this promiſe belongs to the Church Univerſal only, and not to any particular Church; this may ſuggeſt

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a ſevere Caution to all particular Churches in the World, whereſoever they are fixed and planted, carefully to ſtudy their preſervation, and duly to mind and uſe the means that may be effectual to that purpoſe. The promiſe of God doth not fail in the failing of any particular Church, ſeeing that no particular Church hath the warranty of any promiſe from him that it ſhall not ceaſe to be a Church, and loſe the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. If the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity in any particular place or Nation, ſhall become vain in their imaginations, exchanging plain and wholeſom Truths for fond Speculations and Opinions; if they ſhall turn factious and ſchiſmatical, neglecting their Spiritual Guides and Paſtors; if they be diſſolute in their manners, and confute their profeſſion in their lives, they do in effect diſſolve themſelves, and break the bonds of their own communion, and what is more, provoke God to bring confuſion and ruine upon them. They were theſe miſcarriages that opened the way to the *Turks* and *Saracens* to overflow the *Eaſtern* Churches, and let *Mahometiſm* into the World. They were the ſame that brought that deluge of *Goths* and *Vandals*, and barbarous Nations upon

the *Weſt*: and what may happen upon our ſelves for the ſame miſcarriages that are amongſt us, the wiſeſt man amongſt us cannot tell, unleſs thoſe evils be reformed, which plainly threaten deſtruction to us. Sure I am, that Chriſt's Admonition to the Church of *Epheſus* may duly be applied to us: *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candleſtick out of its place, except thou repent*, Rev. 2. 5. Chriſt is ſo far from promiſing ſafety and protection to any particular Church and People, where they neglect their own ſafety, where they wilfully violate his Laws, that he threatens deſtruction and ruine to them; and therefore it is no particular Church, but the Catholick or Univerſal Church, to which our Lord makes this promiſe, that *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*. This being cleared,

2. Let us now proceed to the ſecond point, which is to conſider how far this promiſe of our Lord made to the univerſal Church ſecures it from errour, and defection.

1. And firſt of all, there is no doubt, but that it ſecures it from ſuch errours, as deſtroy the foundation of Chriſtianity,

ty, for whereſoever theſe prevail, the gates of Hell prevail in them, which is a contradiction to Chriſt's promiſes made to his Church, in this place. Errour in matters fundamental deſtroys the being of a Church, and therefore the promiſe which aſſures us, that there ſhall always be a Church, aſſures us there ſhall always be a ſociety of Chriſtians which ſhall not err in fundamentals, that is to ſay, which ſhall profeſs all Chriſtian Doctrine abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

2. But then ſecondly, although this promiſe of our Lord ſecure the Univerſal Church from errour in fundamental Points, yet I conceive, it doth not ſecure it from errour in things not fundamental. I do not ſay, that the whole Church, the Church Univerſal of any age, even ſince the Deceaſe of Chriſt's Apoſtles, hath actually erred even in things of leſs concernment. But this I ſay, that this promiſe doth not ſecure it from ſuch errour. The reaſon is, becauſe the Church may err in matters that are not fundamental, and yet continue a true Church: for as a particular or ſingle perſon may be a true and real Chriſtian, although he miſtake in leſſer matters, in ſuch as do not

appertain to the foundation of Chriſtianity; ſo alſo may a Society of men be a true Church although they err in the like matters. Errour in matters of leſs concernment doth no more deſtroy the being of a Church, than leſſer irregularities in practice, and certainly ſuch irregularities do not deſtroy the being of it. There was ſomething of faction, and ſomething of prophaneneſs alſo in the Church of *Corinth*, *one was of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas*, 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. And when they came to the *Lords Supper*, one was *hungry*, and another was *drunk*, and the rich deſpiſed and contemned the poor, 1 *Cor.* 11. 21. (which certainly were no ſmall miſcarriages) and yet St. *Paul* doth ſtill acknowledge, that they were a true and real Church. And ſo he ſtiles them, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2.

There were not many of the ſeven Churches whereunto St. *John* writes by the Spirit, and in the name of Chriſt himſelf, as unto true Chriſtian Churches, but had ſome conſiderable faults in them. For thus is our Lord brought in as ſpeaking to the Church of *Epheſus*. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent*, &c. Revel. 2. 5. to the Church of *Pergamus*, *I have a few things againſt*

againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam. Revel. 2. 14. to the Church of *Thyatira, I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that Woman Jezebel, which calleth her ſelf a Propheteſs, to ſeduce my ſervants,* &c. Revel. 2. 20. to the Church of *Sardis, I have not found thy works perfect before God.* Revel. 3. 2. to the Church of *Laodicea, I would thou wert cold or hot, ſo then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth* (unleſs thou reform in due time.) *Revel.* 3. 16. 18. The ſumm is this, as there may be a true Church where there are defects in point of practice; ſo there may be a true Church alſo, where there are defects in point of truth, provided they be not in thoſe truths which are fundamental to Chriſtianity. And therefore ſince this promiſe of Chriſt, *that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church,* imports no more, but that there ſhall always be a true Church, it doth not ſecure the ſame Church from errour in matters not fundamental. And now to reflect upon this Point.

1. Hence we learn what it hath been that hath preſerved the Church of Chriſt, and the Chriſtian Faith in

that Church, in all its ſeveral dangers and hazards in the ſeveral ages of Chriſtianity, Namely, the faithfulneſs of our Lord to this his ſtable and gracious promiſe, *that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church*, which faithfulneſs will appear more ſignal, if we ſhall make a ſhort reflection upon the ſeveral dangers and tryals that have in ſeveral and divers ages aſſaulted the Church and Faith of Chriſt.

1. And firſt of all, when that Church and Faith did firſt appear, they were aſſaulted by perſecution; by perſecution from Jew and Gentile, and that both by the tongue and the ſword, the Scribes and Phariſees amongſt the Jews, the Philoſophers alſo amongſt the Gentiles, bent all their wit, to confute the Faith; and the higher powers, the Princes and Potentates of the World exerciſed all external violence to deſtroy and kill the profeſſors of it. No reproaches were thought too foul to blacken, no tortures too cruel to deſtroy the profeſſours of the Goſpel of Chriſt, for the three firſt ages of Chriſtianity, inſomuch that they had but little time to breath in the intervals of perſecution, while they continued under Heathen Emperours.

2. No

2. No ſooner did the ſupreme power own the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, no ſooner did peace dawn upon the Church by the favour of *Conſtantine* the Great, but that the profeſſors of Chriſtianity broke and divided amongſt themſelves. Then was the Church as much troubled by the Errours and Hereſies, by the Schiſms and Factions of them that profeſſed the name of Chriſt, as it had been in former ages by the open violence of perſecution. 'Tis true indeed, there had been Errours, there had been factions amongſt the Chriſtians before that time, but now they grew to greater height, eſpecially concerning the Perſon of Chriſt; for the repreſſing of which errours, the four firſt general Councils were called.

3. Next after the mutual ſtrifes that aroſe among the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, they fell into the ſleep of ignorance, dark and ſtupid, and profound ignorance, which began in the ſixth and ſeventh Ages, and continued for divers Ages together. And then is was, that all the follies and ſuperſtitions entred into the Chriſtian Church, which are ſtill retained in the Church of *Rome*. Then were Images ſet up in Churches, and great Veneration given to them; then

came in the Invocation of Saints, then the Adoration of Angels alſo, then the opinion of Tranſubſtantiation, then infinite forgeries of Epiſtles, forgeries of large and great Volumes, fictions of the Lives of Saints, fictions of the Miracles done by them, to advance the Glory of the Church of *Rome*: which were no ſooner diſclaimed and baffled by the Reformation that ſtill continues, but they of that Church preſently fell to practiſe the very ſame Cruelties, the ſame bloody Arts upon the Reformed, that the Heathen Emperours had formerly practiſed upon the whole Church of God. Such were the methods that have been uſed to prevail againſt the Church of Chriſt, violence from without, diviſions within, the troubles of danger, the temptations of eaſe, all the cruelties and arts of Satan to bring confuſion and ruine upon it; and yet behold it ſtill continues, and will continue in the world, either in one place or another, by virtue of the promiſe of Chriſt, *that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church.*

2. Seeing that Chriſt our Lord hath made it the matter of a promiſe, *that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*; that is to ſay, that there ſhall

ſhall álways be a Society profeſſing the Faith of Chriſtianity, and living together in communion in the uſe of all Chriſt's Inſtitutions, this may ſerve for an admonition to all Chriſtians to ſtudy Unity amongſt themſelves, to make no breach in the Church of Chriſt, where it is poſſible to keep unity, together with piety and good conſcience. He that promiſed there ſhould be a Church to the end of the world, promiſed the unity and Chriſtian communion of its members amongſt themſelves; without this there is no Church. And he that doth any thing directly tending to break this unity and communion, doth what is in him to fruſtrate the very promiſe of Chriſt, and to deſtroy that Church which he hath founded upon a Rock. In the mean time I múſt profeſs, that I am much more than well ſatisfied in our ſeparation from the Church of *Rome*, or rather in their ſeparation from us, and from the Catholick Church it ſelf, by their infinite variations from it. But on the other hand, I cannot but tremble to think of the many grievous diviſions amongſt them, that are divided from the Church of *Rome*. Theſe, if not timely cured and removed, will certainly bring confuſión amongſt us, and then will that

that old Enemy enter in the ſmoke and darkneſs of that confuſion. I wonder to ſee how little regard, how little value many men have for the preſervation of peace amongſt us. I wonder to ſee what little exceptions, what groundleſs cavils are made pretences to ſeparate from us. Certain it is, that theſe men are infinitely wanting either in knowledge, or ſincerity. If they do not underſtand, that the peace of the Church is a thing of moſt important value for the preſervation of Faith, and love, and the very eſſence of Chriſtianity; if they do not underſtand how weak and trifling all their Arguments againſt us are, and that it is next to an impoſſibility to find a Church againſt which nothing ſhall be objected: if they do not underſtand all theſe things, they are guilty of very great ignorance; but if they do underſtand theſe things, and yet perſiſt in ſeparation, they are guilty of equal inſincerity.

The duty of every good Chriſtian in theſe diſtractions and diviſions, that ſo much trouble the Chriſtian World, is to put up conſtant prayers to God, and alſo to uſe his beſt endeavours for the peace of the whole Church of Chriſt. They are ſhort ſighted in Chriſtianity, and

and very mean and narrow ſpirited, that mind or ſtudy peace no further than concerns a particular Congregation, nay the Church of any particular Nation. Chriſt hath a care of his whole body, and requires an unity and communion not only of the particular Members of any Church, but of all particular Churches alſo. Theſe make up the Catholick Church, and the Catholick Church is Chriſt's body. *There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,* Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6.

There is, ſaith he, *one body,* one univerſal Church, the unity and the peace whereof he recommends unto our ſtudy. Now therefore ſtudy the peace and unity of this Church as much as poſſibly lies in you; adorn it by your Faith and Piety, labour its purity and its peace. For to this end did Chriſt our Lord *give himſelf for it, that he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word, that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it might be holy and without blemiſh,* Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27.

The

The Sixth Sermon.

1 Cor. 14. 15.

What is it then? I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo.

OUR Bleſſed Lord having a while before his death promiſed his Apoſtles *another comforter who ſhould for ever abide with them.* John, 14. 16. that is to ſay, *the ſpirit of truth* to lead them into all truth, renews this promiſe again unto them a little before his aſcenſion into Heaven *Acr.* 14. and commands *not to depart from Jeruſalem, but there to wait for the promiſe of the Father*; and long it was not before this promiſe was fulfilled, and that in a very ſignal manner, for when they were aſſembled together on the day of Pentecoſt, *ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like*

like as of fire, and it ſate upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2. 2, 3, 4. which ſame Spirit alſo then endued them with all other kinds of gifts and powers requiſite for the infallible preaching, and ſure confirmation of the Goſpel. And as theſe miraculous gifts and powers were now beſtowed upon the Apoſtles; ſo afterwards on great numbers of other Chriſtians. Firſt on thoſe that were Jews by birth, as you may ſee, *Act.* 4. 3. *&.* 8. 17. and afterwards on the Gentiles alſo, as it appears from what we read, *Act.* 10. 44.

Then came it to paſs, that all the Churches wherein the Faith of Chriſt was planted, much abounded with ſuch perſons as had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; but no where were there more of theſe than in the famous Church of *Corinth*, which as it was *zealous of theſe gifts* (1 *Cor.* 14. 12.) ſo had it, a plentiful meaſure of them, as plainly appears from the 13 Chapter of this Epiſtle.

Upon this account the Apoſtle directs them in this Chapter how they ſhould uſe theſe ſpiritual gifts, Namely, for the *edifying* of the Church: ſo you read

verſ.

verſ. 12. *for as much as ye are zealous of ſpiritual gifts, ſeek that ye may excel to the edyfying of the Church*; and becauſe the Church could not be edifyed by any thing uttered in an unknown tongue, unleſs interpreted in one that was known, he adds as follows, *verſ.* 13, 14. *wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret*; *for if I pray in an unknown tongue, my ſpirit prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful*, that is, my ſpiritual gift is exerciſed, but my underſtanding is not exerciſed, ſo as to render what I ſay intelligible and uſeful to other perſons; which being ſo, he puts this queſtion, *what is it then*? that is to ſay, what is the moſt deſireable thing? what ſhould we deſire in point of Prayer? to which he anſwers in theſe words, *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo.* That is, the thing to be deſired is, that when the Spirit ſuggeſts and dictates a prayer to any man (as he did to many in thoſe ages by an immediate inſpiration) he may ſo far uſe his own underſtanding, when he prays in a publick congregation, as to utter the Prayer in a known tongue, and in eaſie and intelligible expreſſions, that others may be edifyed by it. Now

Now from theſe words compared with other places of Scripture, I ſhall take occaſion to obſerve, That there were two ways of praying by the Spirit in the firſt Age of Chriſtianity.

1. The firſt of theſe was extraordinary, as when the Spirit dictated a prayer by an immediate Inſpiration.

2. The other ordinary, as when a Man prayed heartily and fervently, but not by immediate Inſpiration; but in the uſe of Faith and Hope, and all ſuch other Chriſtian Graces, as are the fruits of the holy Spirit, and the cauſes of holy and good affection.

1. The former of theſe, that is, the extraordinary gift of prayer ſeems to have been of two kinds likewiſe.

1. In the former whereof the underſtanding of him that prayed ſeems to have been wholly *paſſive*, ſo far as not to have employed it ſelf, either in the inventing of the conceptions of the prayer, or in the uttering thoſe conceptions in a tongue commonly underſtood. Such was the prayer the Apoſtle mentions *verſ.* 14. of this Chapter, *If I pray in an unknown tongue, my ſpirit prayeth*, (that is, the ſpiritual gift that is in me) *but my underſtanding is unfruitful*, that is to ſay, my underſtanding doth not

not imploy and exerciſe it ſelf to expreſs the conceptions of this prayer in a tongue or manner known to all them that hear me.

2. In the latter kind of this extraordinary gift of prayer, (prayer by immediate Inſpiration) the underſtanding of him that prayed ſeems to have been *paſſive* and *active* likewiſe; paſſive ſo far, as to have received all the conceptions of the prayer from the immediate Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt: active ſo far, as to have imployed and exerciſed it ſelf to expreſs and utter thoſe conceptions in a tongue known to them that heard, and in a familiar eaſie manner. And ſuch was the prayer the Apoſtle mentions in theſe words: *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo.* I will utter the very ſame conceptions, which the holy Spirit ſuggeſts to me; but I will uſe my underſtanding to utter them in aknown tongue and in eaſie and familiar expreſſions.

Concerning both theſe ſeveral ways, I have ſomething to obſerve unto you:

1. Concerning the firſt, wherein the underſtanding was wholly paſſive, wherein a man uſed both the gift of tongues, and received the conceptions of the prayer from an immediate inſpiration;

ration, I obſerve the Apoſtle did not allow the uſe of this in Chriſtian Aſſemblies, unleſs that either the perſon that prayed, or elſe ſome perſons preſent had the gift of interpreting what was ſaid. The ground of which his determination was, that nothing was to be ſpoken in the Church, but what might edifie all that were preſent, even the moſt illiterate perſons, and that ſuch as theſe could not be edified by that which was uttered in an unknown tongue, though dictated by the holy Spirit, unleſs it was afterwards interpreted. *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo, i. e.* ſo, that others may underſtand. And ſo ſhould every man pray in the Church, *elſe*, ſays the Apoſtle, *when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhould he that occupieth the room of the unlearned* (how ſhould a vulgar illiterate perſon) *ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtands not what thou ſayeſt. For thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not edified*, ver. 16, 17. So then the Apoſtles judgement is this, That no office is to be performed in the Church, but ſo, that all may be edified by it, that no man is edified by that which he doth not underſtand; and therefore that an un-

known tongue was not to be uſed in the offices of the Church, unleſs there were ſome that could interpret. So he ſuggeſts at the 18, 19 *verſes*: *I thank God I ſpeak with tongues more than you all, yet in the Church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that by my voice I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.* So he more expreſly concludes *verſ.* 27, 28. *If any man ſpeak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the moſt by three, and that by courſe, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the Church.*

Now here I cannot but obſerve the moſt inſufferable contradiction of the practice of the *Roman* Church to the Apoſtles determination. The Apoſtle, you ſee, would not allow that the prayers of the Church ſhould be uttered in an unknown tongue, but there they pray in a tongue unknown unto the people. The Apoſtle would not allow this, no not in them who ſpake by immediate Inſpiration, they practiſe contrary to the Apoſtles expreſs Decree, and that where no ſuch Inſpiration can be pretended with the leaſt appearance and ſhew of reaſon. The Apoſtle ſuppoſes no man edified by the prayers which

which he doth not underſtand, they either judge that a man may be edified by ſuch prayers, or that they may be duly uſed, although the Church be not edified by them; both which expreſly contradict the Apoſtle. If the Church of *Rome* be in the right, then the Apoſtle is miſtaken: if the Apoſtle be not miſtaken, the Church of *Rome* doth groſly erre in judging ſuch prayers edifie, which St. *Paul* affirms cannot edifie, or in judging them fit to be uſed in the Church, although they do not edifie at all.

And is it not now a wonderful thing, that they who ſo groſly, ſo expreſly contradict the Doctrine of St. *Paul*, ſhould boaſt themſelves to be infallible? Is it not yet a greater wonder, that any who have had their education, where the Scriptures are read in a known tongue, ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be overborn into a belief that they are infallible, who erre in ſo plain and ſo clear an inſtance, and in a thing of ſuch concernment?

Certainly, if men were not infatuated by moſt unreaſonable luſts and paſſions, they would never apoſtatize, never adhere to ſuch a Church as found, nay infallible in all her Doctrines, who uſes

its publick Prayers and Offices in a tongue unknown unto the people, a thing ſo contrary to common ſenſe, and to the practice of primitive times, and to what the Apoſtle himſelf teaches in as full, and clear, and expreſs words, as any thing poſſibly can be ſpoken.

2. But to proceed to the ſecond kind of the extraordinary gift of prayer, which was when a man received all the conceptions in prayer from an immediate Inſpiration; but ſo far uſed his underſtanding, as to contrive the expreſſion of them into a tongue known to them that heard him, and into plain and eaſie expreſſions in that tongue. Concerning this I muſt obſerve, that it was a gift of the Holy Ghoſt peculiar to the Apoſtles times, or at leaſt to thoſe that immediately followed, as the reſt of thoſe miraculous powers and gifts were, which God did then beſtow on the Church to confirm the truth of Chriſtianity. I do not deny, but that God doth ſtill in ſome caſes ſuggeſt to the minds of good men what is convenient for their condition, and what it is they ſhould Pray for. I do not deny, but that when they fall into ſuch ſtraits, as that they know not what it is beſt to pray for, God doth direct and guide their minds by

by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit. For as there is need of ſuch aſſiſtance in ſuch caſes, ſo God denies not what is needful to ſuch perſons. And this is the meaning of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewiſe alſo the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought.* He ſpeaks in this place of times of great diſtreſs and danger, when the Chriſtians were often in ſuch perplexities and doubts of mind, that they knew not what to pray for, at leaſt with faith and reſignation, entire reſignation to God's will. Now here it was, that the Spirit of God directed them to pray for ſuch things, and in ſuch a manner as might tend effectually to Gods glory, though to their ſufferings in the world. And thus far I doubt not may we expect the like aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit in the like caſes, if we heartily pray for it. But now for any Man in theſe days to expect an immediate inſpiration of all the conceptions of a prayer, ſuch as the Apoſtles and Prophets had in the primitive times of Chriſtianity, for any Man to pretend to pray by the ſame immediate Revelation, whereby they prayed in the Chriſtian Churches, is a very groundleſs and great preſumption. And therefore when you hear men pray

with a great torrent and flow of words, you are not preſently to imagine (as divers ignorant perſons do) that ſuch a man prays by an immediate inſpiration, that what he ſpeaks is juſt then dictated and ſuggeſted by the Holy Ghoſt, as things were ſuggeſted to the Apoſtles, unleſs he could alſo ſpeak with tongues, and heal the ſick, and cure the lame, and in a word do ſuch Miracles as they did, and give the ſame proof of his Inſpiration, which they did evidently give of theirs: which is a thing that is not done by any that now pretend unto it, and therefore ſhews the pretence is vain, and the Pretender to be deceived, if not a Cheat and Impoſtor likewiſe.

Is there then no way in theſe days, whereby a Man may truly be ſaid to pray by the Spirit, in the ſenſe and language of the Scriptures, and that in ordinary and common caſes? Yes, that there is. For,

2. Such is that other way of praying, which I have before mentioned to you, which is, when a man prays in the uſe of Faith and Hope, and all the Graces of Gods Spirit, and with ſuch pious and good affections, as are the effects of thoſe Graces, though not by immediate inſpiration, that is to ſay, the immediate dictate

dictate of the Spirit. Such is the prayer our Saviour ſuppoſes in thoſe words, *Joh.* 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth,* not carelelly and without attention, not without the affections of the heart and inward ſenſe of the mind and ſpirit, as the Jews had worſhipped him in former Ages; but fervently, heartily, and ſincerely. Such is the prayer the Apoſtle mentions *Eph.* 6. 18. where he requires them to *pray always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit:* that is, with ſpiritual and holy minds, with fervent and devout affections. Like whereunto was that ſinging alſo, which he repreſents in theſe words, *Speaking to your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, ſinging and making melody in your hearts,* Eph. 5. 19. Where you plainly ſee, that the holy Offices wherein the heart was moved and affected, are ſaid to be *ſpiritual* on that account. See alſo *Col.* 3. 16. Now concerning this way of praying by the Spirit, wherein men pray in the uſe of Faith, and with real, and hearty, and devout affections, though not by immediate Inſpiration, I ſhall obſerve ſeveral things.

1. That this way or manner of praying is grateful and acceptable to God. This is in truth ſuch a worſhip of God as our Saviour himſelf did underſtand, when he ſaid, that they that worſhip God muſt *worſhip him in ſpirit and truth.* This is the worſhip that God requires, and therefore this he accepts alſo. This is really prayer in Faith, in belief of the promiſes God hath made, and certainly God accepts ſuch prayer. This is a prayer put up to God with devout, and humble, and holy affections (for ſo I ſtate the nature of it) and ſuch was that the Apoſtle required, *Eph.* 6. 18. and therefore ſuppoſed to be grateful to God; and ſo will every one believe, who knows that the heart is in ſuch prayer, and that it is the heart which God requires. And to ſay no more, ſuch Prayer as this, although it doth not proceed from an immediate Inſpiration, a preſent dictate of the holy Spirit; yet is it the mediate effect of the Spirit, as being the effect of that Faith, that Hope, that Love, and Charity, and Humility, which is the fruit of the Spirit of God. It is the fruit of theſe Graces (and whatſoever elſe is of the ſame nature) and theſe are the fruits of the Spirit of God, *Gal.* 5. 22, 23.

2. The

2. The ſecond thing which I muſt obſerve concerning this way of praying by the Spirit is, that it is applicable to a form of prayer. The words of Scripture are a form of words, and will any man ſay that he cannot read, or hear thoſe words read unto him, and heartily believe what he hears, or reads, and be as heartily affected with it? If he cannot do this, let him confeſs that he doth not believe the word of God when he hears it read, and that he is nothing affected with it; but if he will not confeſs this, let him confeſs that faith and zeal; faith, and pious, and holy affections may be applied to a form of words, and conſequently to a form of prayer.

2. Moſt of thoſe perſons who diſallow a form of Prayer and thankſgiving to God, allow and practiſe a certain form in ſinging Pſalms; and what are ſuch Pſalms but certain forms of praying and rendring thanks to God? and if Men can heartily pray to God in verſe or meeter, why not in proſe as well as in verſe?

3. All the Proteſtant Churches of other Nations, all the Chriſtian Churches in the World, have ſet forms for their publick Offices, and ſo hath the whole Church had for fourteen hundred

dred years at leaſt; and therefore certainly it was, and is the ſenſe of the univerſal Church, not only that it was very lawful, but moſt expedient and uſeful alſo, that the publick Offices of the Church ſhould be performed in a ſet form; and that men might pray in a ſet form, and pray by the Spirit at the ſame time, that is to ſay, in Faith, and Hope, and with holy and devout affections.

4. Add hereunto that there are divers forms of Prayer expreſly preſcribed in the holy Scripture, a form of benediction, whereby the Prieſt was to bleſs the People, *Numb.* 6. 23, 24, 25, 26. a form for the offering of the Firſt-fruits, *Deut.* 26. 5, 6. *&c.* That *David* compoſed many of the Pſalms (as the titles of them expreſly ſhew) to be uſed as publick forms of Prayer in the ſolemn worſhip of God in the Temple. That our Saviour himſelf gave that, which is called the *Lords Prayer*, as a form of Prayer to his Diſciples, according to the cuſtom of the Jewiſh Doctors, and *John* the *Baptiſt*, who did the like for their Diſciples. Now had it not been a poſſible thing for men to uſe a form of Prayer with faith and zeal, and holy affections (as every man always ought,

to

to Pray) we ſhould have had no forms of Prayer expreſly preſcribed in the holy Scripture.

5. And to conclude the preſent point, were not faith, and zeal, and devout affections applicable to a form of Prayer, no Man could heartily joyn in a Prayer, which he hears uttered by another Perſon, for all ſuch Prayers, whatſoever they be to him that ſpeaks, are certain forms to them that hear them; to them they are as limited forms when they are ſpoken, as if they had been Printed, and read; for the words are ſtill the very ſame, and all the ſenſe contained in them. And ſo I conclude the ſecond Obſervation, that is, that a Man may Pray by the ſpirit, that is, in Faith and holy Zeal, and Pray by a Form at the ſame time.

3. I muſt further obſerve unto you, that as the way of Praying by the Spirit is applicable to a form of Prayer, ſo that it ought in very truth to be applied to every Prayer we make to God, whether it be with, or without a form; God hears no Prayers, accepts no ſervice offered to him, where there is no attention of mind, no Zeal, and Affection in the heart. It is a great neglect of God, a dangerous irreverence

rence to our Maker not to attend to what we ſpeak, or what is ſpoken in our name, when we make our addreſſes to him by Prayer: doth any man ſpeak unto a Prince, not minding what he ſpeaks unto him? doth any man make an addreſs to a King without giving heed to his own addreſs? and if we judge it a great irreverence to ſpeak to a Prince without attending to what we ſpeak, what ſhall we judge of that affront men do to God, when they attend not to thoſe Prayers, which they themſelves offer to God, or are offered by others in their names, in their preſence and behalf?

And then for Faith, and Zeal, and Fervour, theſe are the very life of Prayer, Prayer is but ſound and noiſe without them. Men may pray, and pray acceptably, where they do not utter expreſs words, *Rom.* 8. 26. but the moſt excellent words in the World are not true and real Prayer, where there is nothing of deſire, nothing of affection added to them; *Confeſs your faults one* to another, ſaith S. *James*, cap. 5. 16. *and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* 'Tis the fervent Prayer that is effectual, the effectual Prayer that is uſeful to us; and who

who can wonder that God ſhould not hear thoſe Petitions, which are void of affection and deſire? if we our ſelves neglect our Prayers, thoſe very Prayers we ſeem to make, how much more will God neglect them? why ſhould he grant what we our ſelves do not deſire? eſpecially ſince it is an affront, a mocking of God, to ask of him what in truth we do not really deſire, what we have no mind to receive from him; which is indeed the very caſe, when our Prayers have nothing of attention, nothing of zeal and affection in them. What then ſhall we ſay to all that coldneſs, all that remiſneſs which appears in our publick and ſolemn worſhip of God? By this we loſe thoſe ſpiritual joys, thoſe ſenſible warmths and feeling comforts, which always attend fervent Prayer, and tend to the ſtrengthning of Faith and Hope and all other Virtues and Chriſtian Graces. By this we fail of God's acceptance, and of gaining the things we ask of him. By this we give ſcandal to other perſons, who take occaſion from our remiſneſs and want of zeal in our addreſſes unto God, either to refuſe to join with us, or deſpiſe the worſhip of God in General.

See then how highly we are concerned

ned to awake into a ſenſe of God, to ſtir up our ſelves to a greater exerciſe of Faith, and Zeal, and holy affections in all our addreſſes unto God. Think who it is, *in whom you live, in whom you move, and have your beings*; think who it is, who is the donor of all good, things relating to this, or a better life; think of your own daily wants, and of the numerous harms and dangers, the many temptations and ſeductions, you are every day expoſed unto; and think how juſtly God may expoſe and give you up, either to thoſe dangers or temptations; unleſs you conſtantly apply unto him by fervent Prayers and Supplications for his protection and aſſiſtance, for his good Spirit to guide and help you, to enlighten your minds, to cleanſe your hearts, to purge your affections, to order your ways, and ſo to conduct you to Life Eternal.

The Seventh Sermon.

1 Joh. 3. 3.

And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.

THE Apoſtles ſpeaking to ſuch perſons as laboured under many trials and great indignities in this world, are always wont to put them in mind of two things, *firſt* of the love of God to them under their ſufferings and perſecutions, and *then* that theſe very perſecutions are a ſignification of this love. So this Apoſtle begins this Chapter: *Behold*, ſaith he, *what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God: Therefore the World knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.* And leſt he ſhould ſeem to impoſe upon them by meer words, to court them with an empty title, while he ſaith they were *called the ſons of God*; he further adds, that they were really and truly ſo; for ſo he proceeds in the ſecond

ſecond verſe, *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God.* And that they might further underſtand the great advantage of this relation, he adds to this, as it there follows, *and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear* (or as ſome others read the words) *when it ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* we ſhall enjoy him in that Glory wherein he appears in Heaven it ſelf to thoſe that are admitted thither. We ſhall ſee him *not through a glaſs darkly, but we ſhall ſee him face to face.* From whence it follows, that we ſhall be like him both in purity and immortality, ſeeing that none that are not ſo, can poſſibly ſo enjoy or *ſee* him.

And then that the promiſe of this Glory might prove effectual for its end, by moving every man to imitate him in this world, whom he hopes to enjoy in that to come, *to purifie himſelf as God is pure*; he lets them know the mighty power of the very hope of enjoying God in immortal Glory in order to a holy life. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf as he is pure.* Where I ſhall not need to put you in mind, that theſe words, *purifieth himſelf as he is pure,* deſign and expreſs an imi-

tation,

tation, not an equality of God's holineſs and perfection: the latter of theſe is wholly impoſſible to every creature, the former neceſſary for every perſon that ſeriouſly aims at immortality. Nor ſhall I ſtand to divide the words into any ſmall minute parts, leſt by inſiſting upon them, I ſhould, as it happens in ſuch caſes, loſe or obſcure the ſenſe of the whole, and trifle away the deſign of them.

And therefore, omitting uſeleſs care and curioſity, I ſhall conſider,

1. The nature of this Hope, which is ſaid to purifie them that have it.

2. And then ſecondly, the ſeveral ways whereby it hath this effect upon them.

3. To which I ſhall add ſome conſiderations, as conſequences of the words before us, and the diſcourſe I ſhall make upon them.

1. And firſt of all it will be requiſite to obſerve the nature of this Hope, which purifies men as God is pure, ſeeing there are ſome kinds of hope, and thoſe of future bliſs and happineſs that have no ſuch influence upon men, as to purge and cleanſe them from their luſts, but rather to move them to indulge them. We plainly find there are

great numbers, who profeſs the hope of future Glory, we have no reaſon to imagine but that they really hope for it according to their own profeſſion, and yet experience clearly ſhews, that it hath not this effect upon them, which the Apoſtle here deſcribes, they ſtill continue in their ſins. From whence it appears this hope of theirs is not that which is here deſigned, it wants the efficacy and ſucceſs, and therefore alſo the nature of it.

What then is the hope, which our Apoſtle here deſigns? A firm expectation of gaining that happineſs which God hath promiſed, conſiſting in Purity and Immortality, upon the terms whereupon 'tis promiſed, and by the aſſiſtance of his Grace, which he will not deny them that aſk it. This is ſtiled a hope ἐπ' αὐτῷ, for the words *in him* reſpect not the perſon poſſeſſed with, but God upon whom it is fixed and ſetled; a hope deficient in any of theſe will not purifie them that have it. A hope that is not ſo deficient muſt of neceſſity be thus qualified.

1. It muſt be an expectation of that happineſs which God hath promiſed.

2. It muſt be an expectation of it upon the terms whereupon 'tis promiſed.

3. It

3. It must be a firm, and not a wavering expectation.

4. It must be a firm expectation of it, that is to say, of attaining to it by the assistance of God's Grace, and not by the power or strength of Nature. This is the nature, these the conditions of that hope that purges the hearts, and reforms the lives, and consequently saves the souls of men; no other kind of hope will do it.

1. It must be an expectation of that very happiness God hath promised, consisting in the enjoyment of God in perfect purity and immortality. The hope of a carnal sensual Paradise would never purge and cleanse the spirit, but on the contrary defile and stain it. For although it be very true indeed, that a man may possibly deny himself one sensual pleasure in the expectation of another, greater than that he foregoes at present; yet is it a thing wholly impossible, that the hope of any sensual happiness should any way mortify sensuality. He that makes any sensual pleasure the very end and design of life, and hopes for this as for his happiness, can never by virtue of this hope study to mortifie and subdue sensual appetites and inclinations: from whence it ap-

pears, that that hope which ſhall deliver and purge the ſoul from ſenſual and corrupt deſires, muſt be a hope of ſuch a happineſs as God hath promiſed, namely the fruition of God himſelf in purity as well as immortality.

2. Nor is it ſufficient for this end, that it be a hope of the very happineſs God hath promiſed, unleſs it expect that happineſs upon thoſe terms and no other, whereupon 'tis promiſed in the Goſpel; and thoſe are *faith working by love*, thoſe are, as God himſelf declares, *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world.* Whence that of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *Chap.* 12. *verſ.* 14. *Follow peace with all men and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* He that hopes for happineſs without theſe terms, cannot by vertue of that hope be any way moved to practiſe theſe; ſo far is ſuch a hope as that, from moving men unto their duties, that it gives them the very greateſt encouragement to live in the perfect neglect of them. What need they to deny themſelves, and their vicious appetite and deſires? What need they to offer any violence to their ſinful luſts and inclinations? Why ſhould they part with a right hand, why ſhould they

they pluck out a right eye, forego the pleaſure, loſe the profit of any luſt, if they can hope for eternal glory in the fruition of their Luſts, and reconcile the hopes of Heaven with all the deſires of fleſh and blood, and ſoft indulgence to thoſe deſires? From whence I conclude, that that hope which purges the hearts and lives of men, muſt be a hope of that happineſs that God hath promiſed upon thoſe terms, and thoſe only, whereupon 'tis promiſed in the Goſpel.

3. And yet further we muſt obſerve, that it is only a firm aſſurance of arriving at that eternal happineſs upon the performance of thoſe terms, that ſhall enable us to perform them. Conjecture is too weak a thing to overcome thoſe ſtrong temptations, that dare men into ſin and folly. No man will deny himſelf what he feels to gratifie his ſenſual appetites at the preſent, upon meer *gueſs* of what may poſſibly be hereafter. Strong deſires are not ſubdued by weak hopes. Men will not deny their preſent eaſe, their preſent pleaſures, their preſent joys, though never ſo contrary to the Goſpel, upon meer probabilities and peradventures; they will be ſure of ſomething future, before they part with

what they have; they will be ſure of ſomething better, before they forſake what they feel or apprehend to be good and uſeful at the preſent. And it was want of this *aſſurance* in the Philoſophy of former days that made its Precepts and Inſtitutions ſo ineffectual in the World, and ſo *Lactantius* then obſerved. *Omnia ibi conjecturis aguntur, & ideo nemo paret, quia nemo vult in incertum laborare. Philoſophy affords but meer conjecture in the point of future life and happineſs, and therefore no man obſerves its precepts, becauſe no man will labour at all adventures.* From whence I conclude, that that hope which ſhall effectually perſwade with men to obey the Precepts of our Lord, to cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, muſt be a firm and ſtrong *aſſurance* of gaining the happineſs God hath promiſed upon the terms that he requires, ſincere obedience to his Precepts

4. But now becauſe it is impoſſible for fleſh and blood in this degenerate ſtate of man, and in the midſt of theſe temptations, which daily aſſault him in this ſtate, ſincerely to obey thoſe Precepts without the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit; there is yet a further qualification that is required in that hope which

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ſhall enable us ſo to do, which is, that it wholly grounds it ſelf upon the promiſe of God's grace, and moves a man to apply to God for the aſſiſtance and help thereof in the purifying of his heart and life. Nature will never raiſe it ſelf to a ſupernatural ſtate of Life, or to a ſupernatural end. Man is of the Earth earthy, and in no capacity ſo to elevate his own thoughts, ſo to advance his own deſires, as to prepare and fit himſelf for that happineſs which lies in likeneſs to God himſelf, in perfect Purity and incorruption, without the aſſiſtance of God's grace. And therefore that hope muſt of neceſſity be ſucceſsleſs, muſt fail to cleanſe and purge our hearts, to purifie us as God is pure, which ſhall not be ſo far inſtructed as to teach us to apply to God for the aſſiſtance of his Spirit in a work above the power of Nature.

But now (to recollect the ſumm of what I have ſaid upon this point) that hope which fixes on that happineſs which God hath promiſed in the Goſpel, conſiſting in purity and immortality; which is a hope of this happineſs upon thoſe terms, and thoſe only, whereupon it is there promiſed to us; which is a firm and full aſſurance of that happineſs upon

the performance of those terms; which grounds it self upon the assistance of God's Spirit in that performance (and therefore moves to apply to God by fervent prayer for the attaining of that assistance, which is never denyed when so desired) that is the hope the Apostle intends in these words, that is, the *hope that purifies us as God is pure.* Which leads me to the second general.

2. Where I am to shew the several ways, whereby it hath these effects upon us, and these I refer to two particulars.

1. This hope moves and excites to strong endeavours in order unto this end, namely the purifying of our selves.

2. It is of such a nature as cannot but render those endeavours truly effectual unto that end.

1. It moves to strong endeavours in order unto this great design which is the purifying of our selves from all our inordinate lusts and passions; and the reason is, because it hath firmly fixed the soul upon future glory and immortality, as its only happiness and perfection, the only thing that is fit or worthy to be made the end and design of life, and also fixt and setled this as a most sure and certain truth, that the purifying of

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a Mans heart and life, according to the Laws of Chriſt, is the only and certain way of attaining to that bliſs and happineſs. God hath made us all of ſuch a nature, that we cannot forbear to love our ſelves, nor can that creature forbear to deſire his own happineſs, that cannot forbear to love himſelf; nor can the deſires of that enjoyment, wherein a Man hath placed his happineſs, ceaſe to urge and preſs endeavours in order to the attainment of it.

Suppoſe we then that a Man believe that true happineſs in the purity and immortality, that God hath promiſed in his Kingdom; ſuppoſe he believe that a holy life is the only means to attain this happineſs; ſuppoſe theſe things fixed and ſetled upon his heart by the operation of Gods Spirit; can we imagine but that the hope of ſuch an end ſhould moſt effectually excite and move him to purifie himſelf as God is pure?

Will he not be content to reſiſt his ſinful luſts and appetites, ſubdue his inordinate inclinations, in conſideration of ſuch a happineſs? Will he not be content to deny himſelf all the unlawful Joys and Pleaſures, all the poor and mean advantages that any ſin can offer

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to him in the ſtedfaſt view and hope of it?

Will he think any loſs or diſadvantage that a holy life can bring upon him, to be compared with the loſs of it? Will he think it much to ſuffer the loſs of wealth, or honour, or life it ſelf, rather than that of eternal glory, if he cannot retain the poſſeſſion of one without plain forfeiture of all his title to the other? If he muſt abandon one of theſe, can he doubt whether he ſhall reject? and that under full and clear conviction wrought by the very grace of God (which we ſuppoſe in this hope) that he cannot retain them both together? I may boldly ſay, ſuppoſing the things I have ſuppoſed in this hope, he can no more refuſe to do, or yet ſuffer whatſoever can be propoſed unto him in this life, rather than forfeit that to come, than he can put off humane nature, than he can ceaſe to be a man, and forbear to deſire his own happineſs. The ſtable hopes of Eternal Glory, of the fruition of God's preſence in perfect purity and immortality, will recommend that purity to him as an eſſential part of happineſs and felicity; it will alſo teach him to do and ſuffer whatſoever is requiſite to obtain ſo great

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a happineſs and felicity. *Thus Moſes eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Ægypt, for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward,* Heb. 11. 26.

So Chriſt himſelf for that *joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs deſpiſing the ſhame,* Heb. 12. 2. So did St. *Stephen* part with his life in view of the glory which he ſaw, *Acts* 7. 6. and that with ſuch content and charity, that he Prayed for the very Men that ſtoned him, *Lord lay not this Sin to their charge.* So did the reſt of Chriſt's followers in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity rather chuſe to part with their very lives, as well as their other advantages in the World, than with their title to future Glory. They all judged as St. *Paul* did, *the ſufferings of this preſent time were not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhould be revealed in them,* Rom. 8. 18. which is a ſufficient demonſtration what ſtrong endeavours, to do and ſuffer the will of God, and that in very greateſt tryals, flow from the firm and ſtable hopes of future bliſs and immortality.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that the nature of that hope is ſuch, as that it doth not only move to ſuch endeavours,

deavours, but likewiſe carries that in it which cannot but render them efficacious in the ſubduing every luſt, in the producing of every grace, in the accompliſhing every thing requiſite unto Life Eternal.

For beſides, that the hope I have deſcribed is always quickned and encouraged by the operation of Gods Spirit, which makes it powerful for the purifying of mens hearts and lives; it takes the very force and ſting out of all the temptations of this World, whether they lye in the good or evil, in the hopes or fears of things below.

1. It deſtroys the force of thoſe temptations, that ariſe from Wealth, and Power, and Honour, from ſenſual Pleaſures and Satisfactions, by raiſing the thoughts and deſires of men, and tranſferring them to the things above. So it ſubdues thoſe Capital Luſts, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and pride of life*, Senſuality, Avarice, and Ambition, and all the ſpawn of theſe Vices, Fraud, Oppreſſion, and Revenge, Envy, Malice, and Animoſity. So it begets the Graces contrary to all theſe Vices, Charity, Purity, and Humility. For no man that hath placed his hope upon Eternal Life and Glory as his only

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ly happineſs and felicity, as his ſupreme and ſovereign good, can ſo eſteem the periſhing pleaſures, the fading profits of this World, as to envy thoſe that abound in them, or deſpiſe thoſe that have them not; much leſs to deceive, or to oppreſs, to lie, or flatter, or diſſemble, to defame, or reproach his Neighbour, to do an injury, or deny a favour to attain them. And hence it is that this hope makes men plain, and ſimple hearted, makes them merciful, kind, and gentle, makes them pure and heavenly minded. It elevates the mind, raiſes the thoughts, inlarges the heart, alters the frame of mans nature, and makes him imitate that God, in whom he hath ſetled all his truſt, and in conformity to whoſe likeneſs, with the enjoyment of his preſence, he hath placed all his joy and happineſs. And thus doth the hope of this happineſs raiſe him above the force and power of thoſe temptations, that the profits or pleaſures of this world can offer or ſuggeſt unto him.

2. Nor is it any thing leſs effectual in ſecuring him from the loſs of innocence by thoſe that ariſe from the evils of it, reproach or poverty, or death it ſelf, or any of thoſe many calamities which may

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assault him in the world. He knows these things cannot deprive him of that glory, wherein he hath placed all his happiness; he knows they will shortly have an end: in the mean time he is content rather to suffer all the evils that the present world can bring upon him, than the loss of the hope of life eternal. This hope gives him strength and courage, it gives him patience and resignation to his will, from whom he expects eternal glory, and an increase of that glory, as a reward for all his patience and perseverance in well doing under all his sufferings in the world. Besides, that God never fails to bless and strengthen those persons that patiently suffer his will with the joys and comforts of his Spirit; as the Apostle himself assures us, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3, and following verses, *We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, and not so only, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.*

The summ is this, the stable hope of eternal glory in the fruition of God himself in perfect purity and immortality, renders the man possessed with it,

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ſo indifferent to this world, as to purſue and to enjoy the good of it with great ſobriety and moderation, without ſenſuality, fraud, or injury, without animoſity, pride, or envy, with purity, gentleneſs, and Chriſtian charity. It renders him ſo indifferent to it, as to endure the evil of it with conſtancy, patience, and perſeverance in all ſimplicity and integrity. By theſe he is ſo endeared to God, that as he before gave him the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, ſo he gives him now the joys thereof in the teſtimony of his love to him; which love ſtill further excites a mutual love to God, and alſo to men for his ſake: and by theſe means further improves all his graces, and purifies him as God is pure; which is the ſecond of thoſe generals which I propounded to conſider.

And now to conclude with ſome reflections upon the words.

1. If every man that hath this hope, purifie himſelf as God is pure, then firſt of all hence it appears, that whoſoever doth not this, whoſoever indulges his ſinful luſts, hath not really that hope as it hath been deſcribed unto you, he either hopes for nothing at all after this life, or for another kind of happineſs than

than that is, which God hath promiſed, or to gain it without a holy life, or ſo to live without the aſſiſtance of Gods grace and application to God for it, or he reels and ſtaggers in his hope, and is not firm and ſtable in it. Some or other of theſe defects do always attend that hope, which doth not purifie and reform the lives, and hearts, and ſpirits of men; and that which I take to be the general and great defect in thoſe that profeſs the Chriſtian Faith is, that they hope for life eternal without performing thoſe conditions, whereupon it is promiſed in the Goſpel, namely, repentance and reformation.

Although there be ſcarce one ſingle page in the whole Goſpel, wherein it is not expreſly ſaid, or clearly implied, that no man ſhall ever be admitted into eternal bliſs and glory, who doth not yield ſincere obedience to Chriſts precepts, and purifie himſelf as God is pure; yet will they not ſee what is moſt viſible, they will not believe what is revealed, they will truſt to a fruitleſs, liveleſs Faith, or to ſome Penances, and Satisfactions, and Commutations made with God, doing what he hath not required inſtead of what he hath commanded. No perſwaſions ſhall prevail to move and excite

cite them to do this, no reaſons, arguments, or demonſtration, no not the expreſs words of God, that it is neceſſary to be done; or to forbear to cenſure them as enemies to the grace of God, who do with clear and expreſs Scripture ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of it. They blindly and wilfully ſhut their eyes to the light that ſhines as clear as day in the very Oracles of God himſelf, and ſo they ſtumble, and fall and periſh, and brand, and revile all thoſe perſons, who refuſe to erre and periſh with them.

2. But ſecondly, if every man that hath the hope before deſcribed, purifie himſelf as God is pure:

Hence we learn the great advantage the Goſpel gives us for the puryfying of our hearts and lives. For it hath given the firmeſt reaſons to ſettle that very hope upon, and qualifie it with the very conditions which may make it uſeful and efficacious to purge and cleanſe us from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit. The Goſpel hath promiſed eternal glory upon theſe conditions; and no other; it hath alſo promiſed the Spirit of God to them that ask it, to enable them to yield ſincere obedience to Chriſts precepts, that is, to perform thoſe conditions.

tions. The Goſpel hath given firm foundations of that true and powerful hope, which, where it is, never fails to purge the impure, to humble the proud, to ſoften the hard, and bring them to eternal happineſs.

3. But what then? what if the Goſpel have done this? done it to infinite ſatisfaction to all that believe and entertain it. Why then, *take heed of departing from the living God by an evil heart of unbelief. Take heed leſt a promiſe being left you of entring into eternal reſt, any of you ſhould come ſhort of it.* Fix your hope on eternal glory, but hope not for it on other terms than thoſe whereupon it is promiſed to you, than in obedience to our Lord, than in conformity to Gods image, than in imitation of that God of whom you expect and hope for it. Fix and ſettle this kind of hope in the very bottom of your hearts, and when you have done, uſe it in every part of your lives, and live by the power and virtue of it. Ask its counſel in all the temptations that any forbidden joys or pleaſures, any unlawful gains or profits offer to you, and it will confute and reſiſt them all; it will not ſuffer you to embrace a trifle, a ſhadow, a periſhing vanity, inſtead of eternal

eternal life and glory. Ask its counſel in all the temptations whereby the dangers of the world may attempt your innocence and integrity, and it will reſiſt them alſo, and make you chuſe rather to ſuffer the greateſt evils in this life with patience, courage, and perſeverance in your duties, than loſe your part in God's Kingdom. It will ſubdue and overcome all the inordinate deſires and appetites of the fruitions of this world. It will remove the fears and dreads of all its ſufferings and calamities. It will make you ſober, juſt, and holy. It will make you wiſe, and ſtrong, and patient. It will eſtabliſh you in obedience, and place and ſettle you in that Kingdom, which is in *righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

The Eighth Sermon.

Galat. 5. 13.

Ye have been called unto liberty, only uſe not your liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh.

ALthough the Law given by *Moſes*, was ſo heavy a yoke upon the Jews, that they themſelves, who were otherwiſe apt to glory in it, ſometimes complained of the burden of it, ſaying, *What a wearineſs is it? Malach.* 1. 13. Yet were there ſome of the very Gentiles, and theſe converted to Chriſtianity, who were willing enough to embrace that yoke, which the Jews themſelves were not able to bear. S. *Paul* had no ſooner planted the Goſpel amongſt the *Galatians*, a Colony of *Gauls* ſeated in *Aſia*; but there aroſe ſome falſe Apoſtles amongſt theſe Converts to Chriſtianity, who taught the neceſſity of Circumciſion, pretending they could not be ſaved without it, and ſo ſucceſsful was this attempt (as ſtrong pretences

ces uſe to be upon ignorant and unſetled minds) that the *Galatians* began to waver and yield themſelves to the importunity of thoſe that oppoſed the Apoſtles Doctrine.

Upon this account he ſtirs them up *to ſtand faſt in the liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*, and that they ſhould not ſuffer themſelves *to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage*, v. 1, of this Chapter. And becauſe they might judge that Circumciſion was leſs troubleſom, and more needful than the other Rites of *Moſes* his Law, he aſſures them, that they that ſubmitted themſelves to that inſtitution of the Law, left all the advantages of the Goſpel, *Behold I Paul ſay unto you, That if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing*, v. 2. And this he proves in the next words. *For I teſtifie again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to the whole Law:* that is to ſay, to all the reſt of its ritual Precepts, and to the penal Sanction it ſelf in all its rigour and ſeverity; and therefore no gainer by the Goſpel. And having ſhewed in the following verſes, what is the ſumm of Chriſtianity, namely, *faith working by love*; having perſuaded them to perſiſt in the Faith, which he himſelf had

taught them, having ſharply cenſur'd the falſe Apoſtles, who laboured to pervert that Faith, he adds what you read in *verſ.* 13. *For Brethren ye have been called unto liberty*, only uſe not your liberty *for an occaſion to the fleſh.* In which words we may obſerve theſe two things.

1. An aſſertion of the liberty wherein the Goſpel of Chriſt hath placed us: *Ye have been called unto liberty.*

2. A Caution againſt the abuſe of this liberty: *Only uſe not your liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh.*

1. The former of theſe, the liberty wherein the Goſpel hath placed us, might be repreſented in more particulars than the time will allow me to conſider; and therefore I ſhall confine my ſelf to thoſe two ſpecial inſtances of it, which are much conſidered in this Epiſtle.

1. Liberty from the numerous Precepts, wherewith the Law perplexed the *Jews* in things indifferent in themſelves.

2. And then the relaxation of the rigour of the penal Sanction of the Law.

1. The former inſtance of Chriſtian Liberty is far greater, than is uſually taken notice of; as will appear, if we conſider that there was ſcarce any one inſtance of Life and Action, Religious, Moral,

Moral, Civil, or Natural, wherein the Law given by *Moſes* did not ſcrupulouſly charge and oblige the Conſcience.

The Jewiſh Writers reckon ſix hundred and thirteen Precepts in *Moſes* his Law, moſt of which were meer reſtrictions of that liberty, which natural Religion, nay which Chriſtianity it ſelf allows. It would tire your patience to hear a Catalogue of all theſe poſitive Inſtitutions, and therefore I ſhall only remark a few Particulars in ſeveral kinds.

1. And firſt of all their ſolemn and publick worſhip of God chiefly conſiſted in gifts, and Sacrifices, which they might not offer in any place, which they ſhould judge the moſt convenient, but at the place which God ſhould chuſe, which afterwards proved to be *Jeruſalem*. Every adult, or grown man, was here to appear thrice in the year, and none to appear empty handed, none to make his addreſs to God without a Sacrifice for acceptance; a burnt-offering, and a peace-offering, beſides a ſacrifice for expiation in the caſes wherein the Law required it; which caſes were exceeding numerous. Theſe ſacrifices were to be free from blemiſh, and theſe blemiſh-

es were very many, and ſo were the ſeveral rules preſcribed in offering, killing, and conſuming every ſacrifice made to God, all which things rendred Gods ſervice under the Law, a far more nice and ſcrupulous thing than Chriſtianity now makes it.

2. Next to the ſeveral Rites of worſhip enjoyned the *Jews* by *Moſes* his Law, I might inſtance in the ſcrupulous Precepts, which much perplexed their moral actions: for there were few moral duties, which were not nicely circumſcribed, and punctually determined in Point of circumſtance: The ſeveral dues of the Prieſts, and Levites, their very Charities to the Poor, were ſo determined in point of time, ſo circumſtantiated in point of place, ſo ſcrupulouſly limited and preſcribed, as made it hard to avoid offence in the greateſt heed and obſervation; as will appear from ſeveral inſtances which I ſhall hereafter mention to you.

3. Nor were they thus perplexed and diſciplined with abundance of nice and ſcrupulous Laws in the worſhip of God, and Morality only, but in all their other affairs alſo.

1. They could not ſo much as build a houſe, but after a certain form and manner,

ner, with Battlements added to the roof, *Deut.* 22. 8. They might not dwell in the houſe they had built (at leaſt as they interpret *Moſes*) without certain Schedules of the Law affixed to the Poſts and parts of their doors, *Deut.* 6. 9. Their houſes were ſubject to diſeaſe, that is to ſay, to the Plague of Leproſie, as well as themſelves, to be pulled down, where they were not cured, and in caſe of cure to be purged, and cleanſed by divers rites and expiations, *Levit.* 14.

2. They were not without reſtraint of Law in the cloaths wherewith they covered themſelves. They might not put on any garment of linnen and woollen wove together: they were to edge their Cloaths with fringes: they were (as themſelves expound the Law) to wear certain Schedules of the Law upon their foreheads, and their arms, which are ſtiled *Phylacteries* in the Goſpel, *Mat.* 23. 5.

3. Their meat, and the preparation of it were bounded with far more numerous Laws than any thing which I have yet mentioned. It would be infinite to give an account of the ſeveral kinds of living Creatures, the fleſh whereof were by the Law judged unclean; and the blood and tallow of the clean,

clean, yea the fleſh it ſelf in ſeveral caſes, might not be eaten upon pain of death.

4. Nor was the preparation of their food any freer from the ſcruple of Law, than their food it ſelf. They might not joyn divers kind of Creatures, as an Ox and an Aſs, in the ſame yoke: They might not ſet their Orchards or Vineyards with divers kind of plants together, nor eat of the fruit of the three firſt years, nor of the fourth but at *Jeruſalem.*

They were forbidden to ſow their fields with ſeveral kinds, or ſorts of ſeed; nor might they either plow, or ſow, either in the ſeventh, or fiftieth year. They could not reap where they had ſowed, nor gather the fruits where they had planted without the obſervation of ſuch rules, as were troubleſom at leaſt in point of circumſtance. A corner of the field, Olive-yard, and Vineyard was not to be reaped, or gathered at all, but left behind them for the poor; they might not glean where they did reap, or gather the fruits, either in their fields, or their plantations. They might not ſtoop to take up any little quantity of what might chanceably fall in gathering. If they had forgotten

forgotten a ſheaf of Corn, they might not return again to fetch it. Such were the ſcruples which encumbred them in their very Charities to the poor.

After they had gather'd in their fruits, they might not apply them to their uſe, before they had ſeparated divers portions for other uſes. Firſt a portion to be carried up to the Temple, and there preſented before the Altar; Then another portion for the Prieſts, to be given to them in the Country, neither of which was to be leſs than a ſixtieth part of all their fruits by the Decree of their wiſe men; Then a firſt Tythe to be given to the Levite; then another Tythe two years together to be carried to *Jeruſalem* (in kind, or value) and there ſpent; and the third year given to the poor of the Land.

After all this, whenſoever they kneaded a maſs of dough: a part muſt be ſeparated for the Prieſt: Whenſoever they killed of the herd, or flock, the Prieſt was to have his ſhare in that. It would be endleſs to reckon up all particulars in this kind. The general account is thus ſtated by the *Jews*, the Poor had nine ſeveral gifts allotted them by a ſtanding Law, three in the Field, four

four in the Vineyard, two in Plantations of other kinds, beſides the ſecond Tythe every third year: the Levites had the Tythe of all the fruits that were conſiderable; the Prieſts had four and twenty other dues, all but one at the Peoples charge, and of the dues that were ſo charged, one was the fleſh of the expiatory Sacrifices, and theſe Sacrifices were required for above fifty kinds of ſins.

But that, which I now inſiſt upon, is not the greatneſs of the expence, which the Law charged upon the *Jews*, but that all their Offices of Love and Charity were ſo circumſtantiated by the Law, that they, who had the beſt inclinations to theſe duties in the general, muſt of neceſſity be much encumbered by the circumſtances which the Law required in the exact performance of them.

5. Add hereunto the numerous Rites preſcribed to the *Jews* in the very culture of their bodies, and that in the very minuteſt things. They could not ſo much as cut their hair, or ſhave their beards but under the reſtraint and ſcruple of Law, *Levit.* 19. 27. They were not begotten, they were not born without a ritual ſtain upon their Parents; every

every woman that had brought forth a child was to take a journey to *Jeruſalem* to ſacrifice for her purification; and the child it ſelf was to be redeemed with a certain price, if it were a ſon, and her firſt-born.

And now that I have mentioned Purification, what ſhall I ſay of the numerous caſes wherein the Jews were made unclean by the ſentence and judgment of the Law? What ſhall I ſay of the ſeveral Waſhings, the ſeveral Sacrifices, ſometimes required to purge and make them clean again? What ſhall I ſay of their confinement, and ſeparation from the Congregation, during the time they were unclean? The Jews obſerve that there were eleven general Fountains (ſo they ſtile them) of pollution, and theſe generals were almoſt infinite in their particular parts and branches. If a man had touched an unclean creature, or any of the clean, which died of themſelves; if he had touched a dead mans body, or any thing elſe which that had touched; if he had an iſſue of blood in himſelf, or had touched another that had ſuch an iſſue, or any thing elſe, which he had touched. In theſe and innumerable other caſes he was by the Law pronounced unclean, and being unclean,

upon

upon pain of death to purge himſelf, ſometimes by Sacrifice, ſometimes by the water of ſeparation, always by bathing himſelf in water.

Time would fail me, if I ſhould inſiſt upon all the minute and ſcrupulous Rites which the Law of *Moſes* enjoyned the Jews: and indeed I have ſaid enough already in order to my preſent purpoſe. For, as it apears from what I have ſaid, they could not legally worſhip God without abundance of nice obſervances, wholly indifferent in themſelves, but hard and troubleſome in performance. They could not diſcharge their moral offices towards men without moſt ſcrupulous obſervations in point of circumſtance of time and place, and other minute conſiderations. They could not manage the leaſt affairs, they could not do the commoneſt things without the ſcruple of Law and Conſcience: For they could not build or inhabit their houſes, they could not ſo much as cloath themſelves, they could not plow nor ſow, nor plant, they could not reap or gather in their fruits; they could not eat, or prepare their meat; they could ſcarce diſcharge any one action, religious, moral, civil, or natural, but under the check of a poſitive Law.

And

And that which is further to be obſerved is, that the moſt exact performance of the letter of all theſe poſitive Laws, might leave them vicious and immoral, full of hypocriſie, pride, and malice, ſlaves to the world and their own luſts, and that where it left them in this condition, it did neither improve them in themſelves, nor recommend them to God's acceptance, much leſs procure eternal life. Which plainly appears from the Scribes and Phariſees, who although the moſt exact obſervers of all theſe ritual inſtitutions, were moſt impure, and foul within, and leaſt acceptable unto God.

Yet after all it was not needleſs, and therefore no unreaſonable thing, that a People, amongſt whom God himſelf in the firſt Ages of their Polity held the place of a Civil Magiſtrate, a People prone unto Idolatry, and living among idolatrous Nations, ſhould be thus bound up by poſitive Laws in every inſtance of life and action; that ſo whatſoever they ſaw or did, the commoneſt actions in the world, might put them in mind of the true God, and of his abſolute Soveraignty over them. Eſpecially ſeeing that their bondage under this toilſom Diſpenſation might better diſpoſe them

them to embrace the eaſier ſtate of Chriſtianity, when God ſhould pleaſe to call them to it. S. *Peter* tells them, that *Moſes* his Law (meaning its poſitive inſtitutions) was ſuch a *yoke as neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, Act. 15. 10. Chriſt tells us, that *his yoke is eaſie, and his burden light*, Mat. 11. 30. They were in bondage under *the elements of the world*, Gal. 4.3. And as S. *Paul* himſelf ſtiles them, under *weak and beggarly elements*, v. 9. We are under a *royal law*, Jam. 2. 8. We are under the *law of liberty*, Jam. 1. 25. a Law recommended by better promiſes, a Law attended with greater helps, larger effuſions of God's Spirit, a Law that requires little elſe, but what is immutably good in it ſelf, a Law, that where it proceeds further, reſts in few and eaſie inſtances, in *Baptiſm*, and the *Lords Supper*: theſe are the Sacraments of the Goſpel; theſe are but two, and both of them eaſie in practice, eaſie in ſenſe and ſignification, and alſo greatly uſeful to us both to oblige us to our duties, and to increaſe our ſtrength and comforts. Such is the liberty wherein the Goſpel hath placed the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, a liberty from thoſe numerous rights, thoſe ſcrupulous Precepts and

and injunctions, which fettered and perplexed the *Jews* in every inſtance of life, and action.

2. Yet ſecondly there is a further liberty, wherein the Goſpel hath placed us Chriſtians, ariſing from the relaxation of the rigour of the penal Sanction, which was added to the Law of *Moſes*.

The Law, indeed, did not threaten death to every ſin, but in ſome caſes allowed a ſacrifice for expiation; but whereſoever it threatned death in expreſs words, it did not allow repentance it ſelf as a condition of remiſſion.

Add hereunto that the ſame Law did threaten death to abundance of ſeveral kinds of ſins (which the time will not ſuffer me to enumerate) whenſoever committed againſt knowledge. So that whoſoever had ſo ſinned in any of thoſe numerous kinds, had no diſpenſation from the Law, no not upon repentance it ſelf, but was by the ſentence of the Law, to die by God or the Magiſtrates hand.

'Tis true indeed the Law-maker did ſometimes, that is, in ſome extraordinary caſes, diſpenſe with the rigour of his own Law. An Example whereof we have in *David*, who although he

was the ſupream Magiſtrate (and therefore not to account to Men for his tranſgreſſion of the Law) was liable to the hand of God, a puniſhment threatned in the Law) for his ſins in the *matter of Uriah*, yet was not cut off by God's hand, but pardoned upon his deep repentance. But this pardon was not the Act of the Law it ſelf, but the diſpenſation of the Law-giver. And ſo indeed were theſe promiſes, wherein the Prophets proclaimed pardon, where the Law expreſly death, as when they promiſed remiſſion and pardon to Idolaters themſelves, if they would repent.

For ſuch was the rigour of the Law, that whenſoever it threatned death, it did not diſpenſe with the guilty perſon, no not upon repentance it ſelf, not upon amendment, and reformation. This is the meaning of the Apoſtle, when he ſaith, that *the Law worketh wrath*, *Rom.* 4. 15. when he ſtiles it *the miniſtration of condemnation*, 2 Cor. 3. 9. This is the reaſon, why having oppoſed it to the Goſpel, as the letter unto the Spirit, he further adds, *that the letter killeth, but that the ſpirit giveth life*, *verſ.* 6. of the ſame Chapter: this is the reaſon, why Chriſt is ſaid to have come in the fleſh to *deliver them, who through*

through fear of death were all their life time ſubject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15. For as the Law threatned death to very numerous kinds of ſin, ſo it admitted no expiation, no ſacrifice, no repentance unto life, where it expreſly threatned death, and here was the rigour of the Law.

Now the Goſpel, on the other hand, although it threaten Eternal Death to obſtinate, and impenitent ſinners; yet it allows, and accepts repentance as a condition of remiſſion in all degrees and kinds of ſin, wherein the Law did not allow it as to the puniſhment it threatned. And this is the thing which St. *Paul* ſuggeſts, *Act.* 13. 38. *Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this man* (that is through Chriſt) *is preached unto you forgiveneſs of ſins, and by him all that believe are juſtified from all thoſe things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* There were numerous ſins from which the Law did not abſolve the offending perſon. The Law did never abſolve, or juſtifie, where a man had wittingly committed a ſin, to which that Law threatned exciſion, but left him without any promiſe of pardon to the Soveraignty of the Law-maker. Whereas the Goſpel in expreſs

words admits repentance and reformation as a condition of forgiveneſs in all thoſe kinds and degrees of ſin: no ſin ſo hainous in its nature, none ſo aggravated by repetition, none ſo heightned by long continuance, whereunto the Goſpel doth not expreſly promiſe pardon upon the Sinners return to God. Here is that grace that pardons the ſenſual and impure upon their amendment and reformation: here is that grace that pardons the violent and injurious upon repentance and reſtitution. Here is that mercy that forgives the impious and profane, if peradventure they ſhall reform and return to God by true repentance. A grace ſo great and undeſerved, that it is ſeldom mentioned in Scripture without expreſſions of admiration. A grace ſo ſignal and ſo eminent, that when the Apoſtle had deſcribed it in the *fifth* Chapter to the *Romans*, he found it needful to ſpend the *ſixth* in caution againſt the abuſe of it. Not that the liberty of the Goſpel, either in this or the former inſtance, is really ſuch in its own nature, as that it gives any reaſonable grounds for Men to indulge themſelves in ſin, but that they, being bribed by their own luſts, take encouragement to do this,

this, where none is given, *that is* (to uſe the Apoſtles words) *uſe the liberty*, given in the Goſpel, *for an occaſion to the fleſh.*

2. And ſo I paſs to the ſecond part, the Caution which the Apoſtle gives againſt the abuſe of that liberty, which is allowed us in the Goſpel.

Now as this conſiſts in two inſtances, liberty from the numerous Rites, and from the rigour of the penal Sanction of *Moſes* his Law; ſo was there ſomething of abuſe of both theſe parts of Chriſtian liberty in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity.

1. For firſt (as to the former inſtances) ſome there were, who being acquainted with their liberty from the Rites and Injunctions of the Law earlier than many others were, uſed the liberty of their conſciences to enſnare the conſciences of other men; ſcorned and cenſured them as weak and ignorant, and by their cenſures and examples engaged them in the neglect of ſome Laws relating to certain days and meats, before they underſtood their liberty, or had due time to underſtand it. And this abuſe of Chriſtian liberty is cenſured in St. *Paul*'s Writings both to the *Romans* and *Corinthians.*

2. Others, obſerving that St. *Paul* denied the neceſſity, nay in ſome caſes forbad the uſe of the works of the Law (that is, of the Rites before mentioned) in order unto Juſtification, took liberty, as St. *James* ſuggeſt (*Jam.* 3.) to abſolve themſelves from the works and graces of the Goſpel, from juſtice, mercy, and humility, from love, and patience, and veracity, from the engagements and obligations not only of the Laws of Chriſt, but even of natural Religion it ſelf. An errour, which to this very day ſo infects the Divinity of many perſons, that it is no wonder to ſee their Followers ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

2. But to paſs on to the ſecond inſtance. The relaxation of that rigour, which was in the penal Sanction of the Law, ſeems to have been no leſs abuſed than liberty from its numerous Rites. For it ſhould ſeem, that ſome perſons obſerving that the Goſpel promiſed pardon, where the Law of *Moſes* had denied it, and judging that the grace of God was highly magnified by that pardon, took leave to indulge themſelves in ſin, under pretence of magnifying God's grace. Which is the errour St. *Paul* cenſures, *Rom.* 6. 12. *What ſhall*

we

we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound? God forbid. God offers no pardon but to the penitent; the deſign of his grace in offering pardon to the penitent, is to invite Men to repentance; and therefore to uſe that grace as an encouragement to impenitence, is to uſe it juſt againſt it ſelf, contrary to its own deſign, as well as againſt a mans own advantage.

How much of this unthankful folly may yet remain in the Chriſtian world, I am not able to determine; but ſure I am, that there is ſomething like unto it in very general uſe amongſt us, which is the delay of reformation grounded upon the promiſe of pardon to every man that forſakes his ſins, although he have long continued in them, a great abuſe of the grace of God. God promiſes pardon to prevent deſpair, theſe abuſe that promiſe to preſumption: God admits repentance after ſin, to encourage us to forſake our ſins, theſe abuſe his grace in that inſtance to encourage them to continue in them, which is to contemn the goodneſs of God, and deſpiſe the mercy they ſhould adore. And ſo St. *Paul* himſelf ſuggeſts, *Rom.* 2. 4. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not know-*

ing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Add hereunto the great imprudence of the delay of reformation, whatſoever may be the occaſion of it. For that a Man, who is born to dye, and after death muſt come to Judgment, ſhould put off repentance 'till the morrow, when for ought he knows he may dye to day, and eternally periſh for want of it, is ſuch an imprudence and neglect, as that it would never have been believed that any man could have been guilty of it, had it not been evident in experience.

The genuine uſe of that liberty, whereunto God hath called us by the Goſpel is, to uſe the freedom that God hath given us from the many and ſcrupulous Laws of *Moſes*, as a motive to a freer compliance with the excellent Precepts of the Goſpel; always remembring that theſe Precepts deſign our freedom, not our bondage. Is it bondage to live in the faith and hope of a world to come? Is it bondage to be juſt and temperate? Is it bondage to be kind and innocent? And to be ſhort, is it any bondage to love God with all our hearts, and to love our Neighbour as our ſelves? that is to ſay, to do to others,

others, as we would that they ſhould do to us. No, this is bondage, to ſerve our luſts, and to loſe the Government of our ſelves, and the command of our own actions by their unreaſonable importunities. There is no ſuch thraldom in the world as to be denied the very liberty of purſuing that, which our own reaſon, our own conſcience approves as good, and avoiding that which it diſallows. And this is the liberty our luſts deny us; namely, liberty to uſe our ſelves for our own advantage in things of the greateſt weight and moment, in the concerns of the world to come.

I have but one thing more to add, which is, That ſeeing God, through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, is pleaſed to admit us to repentance, and upon repentance to pardon of ſin, and eternal life, we make acknowledgement of this his grace by the diligent practice of that duty, which hath the aſſured promiſe of it; neither refuſing nor delaying, where duty to our Soveraign Lord, and gratitude for his grace and mercy, and prudence and charity to our ſelves, oblige us both to ſpeed and diligence.

THE

The Ninth Sermon.

Luke 12. 1.

——*Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees which is hypocriſie.*

IT is not unuſual to find ſuch things as are very different each from other ſometimes compared to the ſame thing, either becauſe this ſame thing may have ſeveral qualities anſwering to thoſe indifferent things, or elſe becauſe the things that otherwiſe greatly differ each from other, may yet poſſibly have ſome one thing (equally) common amongſt themſelves. Upon this account we find the very Kingdom of God, that is, the Goſpel of our Lord (which is the Doctrine of that Kingdom) compared to *Leaven* in the Scriptures. So we find it *Luke* 13. 20, 21. *Whereunto ſhall I liken the kingdom of God? it is like leaven which a woman took, and hid in three meaſures of meal, 'till the whole was leavened.* Where

Where the Goſpel is compared to *Leaven*, becauſe as a little lump of this ſpreads it ſelf through the whole maſs wherewith it is mingled: ſo did the Goſpel of our Lord (as it is here foretold it ſhould) propagate and diffuſe it ſelf from ſmall beginnings amongſt the Jews far and wide through other Nations.

On the other hand we alſo find, that the doctrine and hypocriſie of the Phariſees are by our Lord compared to *Leaven*; and that not only as apt to ſpread and diffuſe themſelves as *that* doth, but alſo as ſwelling the minds of men with pride and bitterneſs, as that ſours and ſwells the lumpit is mixt withal: inſomuch that the prohibition of Leaven in the Paſchal Feaſt was made a Symbol in the Law of the mortification of thoſe vices; and this the Apoſtle alludes unto, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Let us keep the feaſt not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth.*

The doctrine of the Phariſees is ſtiled Leaven, *Mat.* 12. 16. And their Hypocriſie is ſo ſtiled in the words I have now read unto you: *Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees which is hypocriſie.*

Now

Now hypocriſie is an affectation of ſeeming to be what a man is not in point of piety towards God, or love and charity towards men. It is the counterfeit of Religion, an outward ſhew and appearance of it, without the truth of the thing it ſelf.

And becauſe our Lord bids us beware of the leaven or Hypocriſie of the Phariſees, it will be requiſite,

1. To conſider the ſeveral inſtances wherein they exerciſed their hypocriſie.

2. To give an account of the Precept which commands us to beware of it.

1. Now the inſtances of Phariſaical hypocriſie ſeem eſpecially to have been theſe:

1. They pretended to a greater holineſs and devotion, an exacter knowledge of the Law, and an exacter obedience to it, than any other ſort of people, yet were no better than others were; they made a greater ſhew of piety, they had a fairer form of godlineſs, but had no more of the power of it.

Joſephus tells us (*Antiq. lib.* 10. *cap.* 3.) that they pretended to ſuch exactneſs in their lives, to ſuch a perfection in obedience, as that they judged God himſelf rejoyced

rejoyced in them, that he did not only accept of them upon the greatneſs of their piety, but that he pleaſed himſelf in them, and that they were infinitely dear to him.

S. *Paul* himſelf gives ſuch a character of this Sect, as plainly ſhews they judged themſelves far better perſons than any other, and were ſo eſteemed by others alſo. He ſtiles this Sect the *ſtricteſt ſect of their Religion*, Act. 26. 5. and tells us further, that this was eſteemed to teach and act *according to the perfect manner of the law*, Act. 22. 3. Our Lord himſelf brings in the Phariſees openly boaſting a greater piety, a ſtricter life, a higher righteouſneſs than any other kind of men. This he doth *Luke* 18. 10, 11, 12. *Two men*, ſaith he, *went up to the Temple to pray, the one a Phariſee, the other a Publican. The Phariſee ſtood, and prayed thus with himſelf: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Where you find him making a great diſtinction between himſelf and other perſons in the very firſt words he ſpeaks to God. *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.*

Yet after all, if we obſerve our Saviour's character of theſe men, we ſhall find

find them ſo far from being better, that they were worſe than other perſons, that though they profeſt they were no *extortioners*, yet they *devoured widows houſes*, *Mat.* 23, 14. that they were within *full of extortion and exceſs*, v. 25. and to be ſhort, *that they ſhut up the kingdom of heaven from men, that they neither entred in themſelves, neither ſuffered them that were entring, to go in*, v. 13. of the ſame Chapter. And this was the firſt of thoſe inſtances, wherein they exerciſed their hypocriſie.

2. The ſecond was, that they confined all their Religion to outward actions, but all this while neglected the purifying of their hearts.

S. *Paul* reporting what he was while he continued to be a Phariſee, expreſly tells us, that he was *blameleſs* as to the *righteouſneſs in the law. Touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law blameleſs*, *Phil.* 3. 6. His meaning is, that he avoided the outward actions expreſly forbidden in the Law, that he obſerved and performed them, which were expreſly then commanded, according to the interpretation which the Phariſees put upon the Law; more than this he could not mean; he could not poſſibly believe himſelf to have been punctually

ctually clear and ſpotleſs in the inward affections of his Soul, but only in point of outward action. But being ſo, he declares himſelf to have been blameleſs touching the righteouſneſs in the Law, while he continued to be a Phariſee: which plainly ſhews, they thought the Law required no more than a conformity to its Precepts in outward action and behaviour. And thus doth *Kimchi* expound thoſe words, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*: that is, ſaith he, if I only think or deſign iniquity, but do not accompliſh the deſign, if I only think or wiſh the evil, but do not act it in overt action, God will not impute it as ſin to me: a gloſs juſt contrary to the Text, not an explication of the words, but an expreſs contradiction to them. 'Tis true indeed the Law did ſay, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, but did not expreſly threaten puniſhment to them that coveted, if they did not act the ill imagined. Whereupon theſe Phariſees judged it a counſel rather than a precept, in gratification to their luſts, and judged themſelves exactly righteous, when they performed the overt actions the Law required, and avoided them forbidden in it. Such is the nature of hypocriſie, and

ſuch

ſuch was that of the Scribes and Phariſees.

3. As they placed their righteouſneſs wholly and ſolely in outward actions, and the omiſſions of ſuch actions; ſo they performed thoſe actions with abundance of outward pomp and ſhew, that they might be ſeen and praiſed of men. They gave alms, but ſounded a trumpet both in the Synagogues and in the ſtreets at the giving of it, *Mat.* 6. 2. They prayed much, but they loved to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, and this that they might be ſeen of men, *Mat.* 6. 5. They faſted alſo twice a-week (*Luke* 18. 12.) but they put on a ſoure countenance, disfigured their faces, that they might appear unto men to faſt, *Mat* 6. 16. And this, as our Lord expreſly tells us, *Mat.* 23. 5. they did all their *works to be ſeen of men.* Which is the nature of hypocriſie, and a certain ſignification of it.

4. They were far more nice, far more ſcrupulous in leſſer things, than they were in things of greater moment; far more punctual in the obſervance of their own precepts and inſtitutions, than thoſe that were of Gods appointment, and far more diligent in the obſervance

ſervance of God's appointments in ritual matters and conſtitutions, than in the very Laws of Nature, and things of indiſpenſable goodneſs. Theſe are the things our Saviour often objects to them, and more eſpecially, *Matt.* 23. *the* 23. and following verſes, *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith, theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides which ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a camel,* which make ſuch ſcruple in leſſer things, and none at all in things of moment. And yet again in the following words, *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, for ye make clean the outſide of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs*: to waſh the cup before they drunk, to cleanſe the platter before they eat, was an inſtitution of their own, and this they very duly obſerved; to purge the heart from all extortion and impurity was a Law enjoyned by God himſelf, but of this they made no account at all.

5. As they much abounded in Inſtitutions of their own, ſo ſome of theſe were ſo extravagant, that they were

contrary to the very Laws of God, and Nature. What Law more ſacred and indiſpenſable, what more natural, and more agreeable to humanity, than that which requires us to honour our Parents, to relieve and aſſiſt them in their wants, which is both a part, and a ſignification of that honour? yet ſuch was the blindneſs of the Phariſees, that they licenſed a man to make a vow to deny relief unto his Father, and pronounc'd the vow to be obliging; ſo our Lord, *Mark*, 7. 10, 11. *Moſes ſaid, honour thy Father and Mother; and who ſo curſeth Father or Mother, let him dye the devth: But ye ſay, if a man ſhall ſay to his Father or Mother, it is Corban, that is to ſay, a gift, by whatſoever thou mayeſt be profited by me, he ſhall be free; and ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his Father or his Mother, making the word of God of none effect, through your traditions*: inventing a vow flatly cotnrary to God's Law, and making the former oblige and bind to the deſtruction of the latter. Thus did they uſe a pretence of piety towards God, to abſolve and quit them from their very duty to their Parents; uſed Religion againſt Religion, and made the very pretence of it a ground to neglect and contradict it.

6. They

6. They preſcribed to others what they themſelves would not practiſe, their precepts were ſtricter than their lives; to others they were ext reamly ſevere, but kind and gentle to themſelves: whence that reflection of our Lord, *Matt.* 23. 3,4. *Do not after their works, for they ſay and do not, for they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born, and lay them on mens ſhoulders, but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers*: an evident inſtance of Hypocriſie, of prevarication and deceit; for if the duty, though hard and difficult, was yet neceſſary unto others, why was it not ſo to them likewiſe? and if it was not ſo to them, as it ſhould ſeem they judg'd it was not, why was it then ſo to others? why did they then impoſe it on them? why reprove the neglect of it? why upbraid the mote or atome which they eſpied in their neighbour's eye, while they ſuffered a beam to blind their own.

But to proceed to the laſt inſtance of the hypocriſie of the Phariſees, this lay in the flaming zeal they had to make Proſelytes to their Party, to make Diſciples to their Sect, while they made them worſe, and not the better, nay greatly

worſe by ſo doing. And this is the thing objected to them by our Lord, *Matth.* 23. 15. *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye compaſs Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the Child of Hell than your ſelves.* And ſo in truth it came to paſs; for the Proſelytes made by theſe Phariſees became much worſe than they themſelves, the Scholars much out-did their Maſters in their iniquities and wicked lives, the imitation out-did the original, being encouraged by the example; and this was obſerved by *Juſtin Martyr*, οἱ δὲ προσήλυτοι ὑμῶν οὐ μόνον οὐ πιστεύουσι ἀλλὰ διπλότερον ὑμῶν βλασφημοῦσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. *The Proſelytes*, ſaith he, *that are made by you do not only not believe, but do blaſpheme the name of Chriſt twice as much as you your ſelves.* So efficacious are your Examples and your Doctrines to make the Diſciple exceed the Maſter, to make the Gentile exceed the Jew in his impiety and unbelief.

2. Having thus ſhewed the ſpecial inſtances of the Hypocriſie of the Phariſees, which was the former of the two generals before propounded, proceed we now to give an account of the latter alſo (that is) of the Precept which bids

bids beware of it. *Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſie*, which words ſuggeſt theſe things.

1. The greatneſs of the Evil which we are commanded to avoid.

2. The Diligence that muſt be uſed, if we duly obey the Precept.

1. I begin with the firſt, namely the greatneſs of the Evil, which we are commanded to avoid.

1. And here firſt of all obſerve, that Hypocriſie falls exceedingly ſhort of the very thing it pretends unto, namely, of being true Religion, for it is no more than the ſhadow of it: Hypocriſie pretends to the very height of all Piety, but is no more than a poor mean appearance of it.

(1.) It wholly conſiſts in outward actions and omiſſions, performs the acts that ſeem moſt plauſible unto Men, avoids thoſe that are moſt ſcandalous and expenſive, but all this while neglects the purifying of the heart. It doth diſguiſe, but not reform the luſt within, it gilds and paints the outward man, but doth not produce a new life, or a better nature in the heart, it doth not mortifie any luſt, it doth not quicken any grace, it is no

more a true Religion, than a Picture is a living Man, nor doth it reach the Deſign and End of Chriſtianity, which is to reform and change our nature, and form the Image of Chriſt in us, which is in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

2. Charity, Sincerity, an Integrity, are the very life of Chriſtianity, if we have not thoſe, we have nothing of it, we cannot pretend unto perfection, we cannot ſay we have attain'd to the utmoſt degrees, the higheſt meaſures of obedience; ſo that if we can lay no claim to Charity, if we cannot truly profeſs Sincerity and Integrity, although attended with imperfection, we have nothing to ſay for our being Chriſtians, nothing of the truth of Chriſtianity. Now ſo it is, Sincerity, Charity, and Integrity are the very things the Hypocrite wants, it is the nature of Hypocriſie to be void and deſtitute of theſe Graces; if it be not ſo, it is not Hypocriſie, it is not the vice we now mention; if it be ſo, it wants theſe virtues, and therefore the very life and ſpirit of true and real Chriſtianity, and ſo falls ſhort of the very end of true Religion: that's the firſt.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that it doth not only fall far ſhort of

true

true Religion, but that it is a great abuſe, a mock, a ſcorn, a deriſion of it, and in very truth of God himſelf.

(1.) Hypocriſie is inſolence againſt God, but fear and meekneſs towards men; it is an irreverence towards him, that ſearches and knows the hearts of Men, and awe and reverence toward Men, who can but obſerve our overt actions; it is contempt and ſlight of God, who clearly diſcerns the thoughts of the heart; and an honour and homage unto men, who have no further knowledge of them, than as they appear in overt actions; which is a great affront to God, and an equal abuſe of true Religion.

(2.) But then farther, there is another great abuſe that Hypocriſie offers to Religion, which lies in the uſe of the name, and title, and ſhew of it in order to baſe and unworthy ends, which is to pervert the very nature and order of things, and of God's deſigns and inſtitutions, to turn the end into a mean, and a mean into the principal end. Religion according to Gods appointment is to be prefer'd before any ſecular ends and profits, to be the chief in all our aims; and ſo be propagated and promoted

moted by all the talents that God hath given us. But what is the nature, what is the cuſtom of Hypocriſie? it is to debaſe and depreſs Religion to the ſervice of ſecular gain and honour, it is to uſe the appearance of it, in prejudice to the thing it ſelf, and to make a ſhew and fair appearance of Piety, Virtue, and Integrity, to ſupplant theſe very things themſelves: this is the nature of Hypocriſie.

If he would effectually cheat his Neighbour, if he would put a deceit upon him, he pretends to Piety and Religion, he cenſures the Lives and Manners of others, he complains, he harangues againſt the iniquity of the times, that he may better impoſe upon him, gain his credit, and then deceive him. If he would prefer and advance himſelf, intrude into places of power and profit, and thruſt out thoſe poſſeſſed of them, he preſently inveighs againſt thoſe perſons, he pretends Religion in ſo doing, pretends reformation of abuſes, makes the very higheſt profeſſion of Truth, and Juſtice, and Integrity.

If he would gratifie animoſity, and revenge himſelf upon his Neighbour, here he pretends Religion again, here his

his Conſcience is engaged, he is concerned for the publick good, a thing he will never forſake or quit, whatever it coſt him to purſue it.

If he would diſturb the publick peace, create Sedition and Confuſion, if he would overthrow the Government, and change its Laws and Conſtitutions, if he would deſtroy Religion it ſelf, Religion muſt be pretended for it. This he proſtitutes to every baſe and unworthy end, this he proſtitutes to every luſt; he makes it ſerve his Pride, and Ambition, he makes it ſerve his Spite, and Malice, he makes it miniſter to filthy Avarice, juſt as the Phariſees under *a pretence of long Prayers devoured* and eat up Widows houſes, *Mark* 12. 40.

3. And then thirdly, leſt you ſhould think it a thing impoſſible, that any man ſhould pretend Religion, nay great and extraordinary meaſures of it, and yet retain theſe foul luſts of Pride, and Scorn, and love of the World, of Envy, Malice, and Animoſity; you are to know that theſe luſts are not only not inconſiſtent with ſuch pretences, but allow the very ſins themſelves which the Phariſees were chiefly guilty of, and objected to them by our Lord. Their

Their pride and haughtineſs is reproved, *Matt.* 23. 5, 6, 7. *They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the Synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi:* here is their haughtineſs and ambition, their preſumption and ſelf conceit reproved. And then their cenſure and ſcorn of others is alſo detected and chaſtiſed, *Matt.* 7. 3, 4, 5. *Why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy Brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? or how wilt thou ſay to thy Brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

And although the Phariſee in his Prayer thanked God that he was not as other men, particularly that he was no *Extortioner*, *Luc.* 18. 11. yet one that knew them much better than they themſelves knew them; our Lord himſelf; gives us another account of them, he tells us that they were *full of Extortion*, greatly infected with it *within*, *Matt.* 23. 25. And as for malicious craft and ſubtilty, theſe are not obſcurely charged upon them

them by him that could not be miſtaken, *Matt.* 23. 33. *Te ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of Hell? Te*, ſays he, *build the tombs of the Prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the Righteous, and ſay, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets*; and yet they were of the ſame ſpirit their Fathers were, inſomuch that they who here profeſs, that they would never have ſhed the blood of the Holy Prophets, ſhed that of the very Son of God, and of his Followers and Diſciples; and this our Saviour well foreſaw, and therefore adds, (*v.* 32.) *fill ye up the meaſure of your Fathers:* from whence I conclude, that as hypocriſie is a mock-religion, and ſo an abuſe of true Piety; ſo likewiſe that it leaves the hypocrite under the power of Pride, Covetouſneſs, and Animoſity, under the dominion of thoſe luſts, that are moſt flat contradictions to it.

4. Having ſaid ſo much of the nature and quality of this Vice in the three particulars laſt mentioned, you will not wonder at what I ſhall add in the *laſt place*, which is that hypocriſie mightily tends to the utter deſtruction of

of true Religion; not in the hypocrite (for in him it hath no place at all) but in the very world it ſelf, that is to ſay, in all other perſons, and this it doth two ſeveral ways.

1. By debauching the nature of it.
2. By bringing a Scandal upon it.

(1.) For firſt it's the nature of hypocriſie to debauch the nature of true Religion, by turning it into meer formality, into nice and ſcrupulous Superſtitions, in the avoiding, or in the practiſing of things indifferent in themſelves, and endleſs diſputes about theſe things, which do not only imploy mens minds in things that are not of any moment, and take them off from the ſtudy and practice of true Religion, but wholly deſtroy *Chriſtian Charity*, fill men with mutual Animoſities, and by their means eat out the very heart of Piety.

It is the temper of hypocriſie to accomodate it ſelf to the opinion and judgement of men. The generality of mankind look no farther than to the ſhew and ſurface of things, and therefore hypocriſie concerns it ſelf in nothing further, than to obtain the applauſe of Men, either in the obſerving or the avoiding of things indifferent in themſelves, things that may be done or omitted (unleſs commande

commanded by ſuperiours) in the mean time, while it is thought ſufficient on one hand to recommend a man to God if he abound in rite and ceremony, in an infinite number of outward actions, ſuch as are uſed in the Church of *Rome*; and on the other, while all Religion is placed in avoiding all that's decent in appearance, every thing that is called a Ceremony, and a man muſt certainly be a Saint, that ſhall defie and rail at this; true Religion is almoſt loſt, almoſt forgotten and laid aſide in the noiſe of theſe diſputes and quarrels.

2. But laſtly there's yet another way wherein hypocriſie dangerouſly tends to the deſtruction of true Religion, which is by the ſcandal which it brings upon the name of all Religion.

For although it be very true indeed, that men are generally very ſtrangely charm'd by the ſhews and pretences of Religion, yet when it appears, as it doth at laſt where it is not real, that all theſe ſhews are void of truth, that they are but ſhews and nothing more, this makes the very name of Religion deſpicable, odious, and abhorr'd, it brings profaneneſs and infidelity, and makes the very profeſſion of Piety, vile and contemptible in the world, a dange-

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rous and a deſtructive iſſue, as we our ſelves have plainly found by our own experience in this Nation.

Hypocriſie being but a counterfeit Coin, never long retains its Credit: and ſo indeed it happened at laſt amongſt the Phariſees, for although they were in great reputation amongſt the Jews in our Saviour's time, yet I find that they loſt it afterwards, and became ſo deſpicable in the Nation, that they were branded with ſcurrilous names, ſome they called *Sechemitical Phariſees*, ſuch as were ſo for their own profit; others they ſtiled the *ſtumbling Phariſees*, who for an appearance of humility, would ſcarce lift up their feet in the ſtreets; others they called the *wounded Phariſees*, who ſhut their eyes as they went in the ſtreets, leſt they ſhould perhaps behold a temptation, but by ſo doing often fell, and hurt themſelves; others they ſtiled the *boaſting Phariſees*, becauſe they pretended not only to do whatſoever the Law of God required, but alſo a great deal more than ſo: other approbrious names and titles they put upon ſome other ſorts, from whence it appears that they did at laſt loſe all their credit amongſt people; nor need we queſtion, that even true Religion it ſelf became

came contemptible on that account. The life is derided for the deformity of the picture, the truth is prejudiced by the counterfeit, the faults and baſeneſſes of hypocriſie aſcribed to true Religion it ſelf, and this I take to be one reaſon of the infidelity and profaneneſs that reign at preſent in this Nation. God of his mercy remove the Scandals, and heal the diſtempers that are amongſt us.

The

The Tenth Sermon.

Luke 12. 1.

——*Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees which is hypocriſie.*

IN theſe words, as I have obſerved, there are theſe two things ſuggeſted to us:

1. The greatneſs of the Evil, which we are commanded to avoid; this I have already finiſhed.

2. The Diligence that muſt be uſed, if we will duly obſerve the Precept intimated in the word *beware*; which ſhews it is no ſuch eaſie thing to avoid all Phariſaiſm and hypocriſie, as we may perhaps imagine it is.

And for the clearing of this point, I ſhall deſire you to obſerve, that an appearance of Religion, or a Religion in outward ſhow, void of the true ſpirit of it, is apt to recommend it ſelf, and ſtrangely to impoſe on men; as ſuch a Religion which is,

1. Eaſie,

1. Eaſie.
2. Pleaſant. And,
3. Fit to promote and ſerve thoſe ends, which the generality of Mankind are apt to propound unto themſelves.

1. It is an eaſie thing to make an outward ſhew of piety, while the luſt is ſuffered to dwell within, and men naturally love their eaſe, and are ready to content themſelves with that which hath a fair reſemblance of Religion, and that is favourable to their luſts, to love and embrace it on that account.

Men never quarrel with Religion, till it offer violence to their luſts; they uſe it as *Herod* did the Baptiſt, ſpeak it fair, and treat it kindly, and bear fair regard to it, while it is content to oblige no further than to ſome plauſible outward actions. It is never difficult 'till it require them to ſubdue and mortifie the luſt within, and thoſe peculiar luſts and paſſions, which are predominant in themſelves; 'till it demand an eye, or a hand, ſomething that's dear or uſeful to them. Here it is that they forſake it, and caſt it off, when it grows preſſing and importunate in contradiction to their appetites.

In the mean time, if it will indulge

the luſt within, if it will permit pride, and avarice, and animoſity to dwell there, and content it ſelf to paint and gild the outward man, if it will be ſatisfied with theſe external ſhews and actions, which are plauſible in the eyes of men, and thwart no ſecular end and intereſts, no carnal appetites and inclinations, they are ready enough to entertain it.

Now this is the nature of hypocriſie, it will be ſatisfied with thoſe things. This, as I formerly ſhewed at large, was the Religion of the Phariſees. They did confine it to outward actions, and further yet, to thoſe that made the faireſt ſhew in the eyes of men, adding hereto a due care to omit the evils, which were ſo notoriouſly and groſly, ſo that they could not poſſibly be excuſed, either by miſinterpreting the Law, or by blinding the eyes of men, that they ſhould not be able to diſcover them. And this it was that made their Religion ſtrangely ſpread and diffuſe it ſelf through the Body of the Jewiſh Nation.

We are all apt to ſtudy for eaſie ways to Heaven. All mankind deſire happineſs, but they deſire it may coſt them nothing to attain it. This was the

reaſon

reaſon why the Gnoſticks made it lawful to deny Chriſt, to abjure Chriſtianity in times of trouble and perſecution. This is the reaſon why the ſpiritual Guides of the Church of *Rome* are glad to accommodate the Rules of life, and the Conditions of ſalvation, not to the Precepts of our Lord, but to the ordinary ways and manners of mankind. This is the reaſon why they are glad to abſolve from Sin upon mere profeſſion of repentance, to promiſe forgiveneſs and life eternal to them that will undergo the penance, although they will not forſake the ſin.

An eaſie Religion eaſily recommends it ſelf to mens acceptance and inclinations; ſuch was the Religion of the Phariſees, ſuch in truth is all hypocriſie, and therefore ſcarce to be avoided without conſiderable care and diligence.

2. And ſecondly, what is more conſiderable, hypocriſie is not only an eaſie, but a pleaſant Religion to fleſh and blood; as exerciſing it ſelf in cenſuring the vices, ſcorning the Perſons, and oppoſing the Religion of other men; all which things, as they paſs for Religion with many men, ſo are they ſo far from being troubleſome, that they are ſingular gratifications to pride, and envy, and animoſity.

1. The Religion of the Phariſees, that is, hypocriſie, much conſiſts in cenſuring the vices of other perſons. They had an eye upon every mans life, except their own; they had a reproof for every mans faults, great or ſmall, while they were indulgent to themſelves. They were concerned in every other mans behaviour far more than in their own lives. Our Saviour tells us, as I obſerved in a former diſcourſe, that they *laid heavy burthens, and grievous to be born, on other mens ſhoulders, but that they themſelves would not move them with one of their fingers*, Matt. 23. 4. He tells us how ſharp and quick they were in eſpying a mote in their Brother's eye, not conſidering the beam in their own, *Matth.* 7. 3. Which as it paſſes for Religion amongſt the men that are apt to uſe it, ſo it is grateful to fleſh and blood, and the natural paſſions of mankind. It gratifies pride and ſelf-conceit, it gratifies anger and animoſity, it feeds ſelf-love with great content, as making the perſon verily think that he himſelf hath a deteſtation unto evil, becauſe he cenſures it in other perſons.

How eloquent and how free of ſpeech are thoſe men that take upon them to condemn the faults of other perſons! how

how do the words guſh like water from a Fountain! What heat, what warmth, what zeal and paſſion may you diſcover in their language? and whence doth all this Rhetorick flow? what is the Spring of all this Eloquence, but the pleaſure they take in the reproof, in the rebuke of their Neighbour's ſins? So pleaſant is it and delightful to cenſure the faults of other men.

2. Add hereunto another inſtance of the Religion of the Phariſees, very grateful to fleſh and blood, and the ſinful paſſions of humane nature, which lyes not only in cenſuring the faults, but deriding the perſons of other men. I need not ſay how much the Diſciples of our Lord, how much our very Lord himſelf was ſcorned and derided by the Phariſees. But that which I now obſerve is this, That it paſſes for a piece of Religion amongſt ſome perſons, to ſpeak contemptuouſly of other men. To ſcorn a Prieſt, to deride a Biſhop, to mock and ſcorn a whole Profeſſion, is judged by ſome a very conſiderable part of Religion. To invent opprobrious names and fables, to forge, to receive and ſpread reports, falſe and ſcandalous and diſgraceful concerning their perſons and their lives, is now become a

part of Religion with many men. They do not only not accuſe themſelves for this, but they applaud themſelves in it; they do not only not believe themſelvs the worſe, but better men for ſo doing; this is their Religion, this is their Piety, this is the thing for which they prize and value themſelves; and if they ſhould be denied this, they would have very little to ſay, little to plead for their being of any Religion at all. If you ſhould ſtrip them of their zeal in ſcorning thoſe they ought to value, if you ſhould quench all that heat that appears in anger and animoſity againſt the perſons of other men, if you ſhould require what God doth, what is commanded in the Goſpel, to ſhew their Religion in Faith and Hope, and Chriſtian Charity, in patience, gentleneſs and humility, in *righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, wherein the Kingdom of God conſiſts, *Rom.* 14. 17. you would find them far from being that which they imagine themſelves to be, namely, true and real Chriſtians.

In the mean time, being it is ſo pleaſant, being 'tis ſo grateful to fleſh and blood, and to the animoſity which they have againſt the perſons of other men, to brand them with opprobrious names,

to

to pour contempt and ſcorn upon them, and to believe that it is Religion ſo to do; I think we have reaſon to beware of ſuch a dangerous vice as this, which turns a ſin into Religion, and ſo in truth makes a Religion a contradiction unto it ſelf.

3. One thing more I muſt further add to what I have ſaid of this Point, which is the delight that a man may take either in the oppoſing or deriding of the Religion of other perſons, and the great opinion which he may have of himſelf for this, which yet can give him no aſſurance that he is not a hypocrite in ſo doing. I need not ſay, how ſharp and eager ſtrifes are raiſed about Religion in the World, I need not ſhew what fierce debates, what hot contentions there are about it, and have been in all former Ages. Theſe are known and evident things, but that which is here to be conſidered, is, that the zeal that many men have in theſe diſputes, is rather to deſtroy the Religion that is profeſſed by other perſons, than ſet up another inſtead thereof, it is to ſubvert and not to reform, it is to overthrow, and not amend. In the mean time being it is concern'd about Religion, and being it hath a mighty paſſion in this con-

cern, it passes for Religion it self: so apt are men to mistake them, to embrace a shadow instead of truth, and to judge themselves to be Religious for a negative, not a positive thing, for being against the Religion of others, rather than for any of their own; wherein they gratifie their own passions, please their own corrupt affections, and so easily suffer themselves to be deceived and imposed upon.

3. But then thirdly, we must consider, that as hypocrisie is not only an easie Religion, but also pleasant to flesh and blood in many instances and effects; so that it also powerfully tends to serve those ends, which men are apt to propound and follow, that is to say,

(1.) The reputation of being judg'd to be truly pious.

(2.) And the obtaining of wealth and power, and all the advantages of this World.

1. The appearance of Religion destitute of the power of it, doth for a time gain the reputation of true Religion, nay more reputation for the most part than true Religion it self obtains.

Our Saviour relating how the Pharisees gave Alms to gain the glory of men, presently adds, *verily I say unto you they have their reward, Matt.* 6. 2. relating how

how they prayed in the ſtreets to the ſame end, adds the very ſame words again, *verily I ſay unto you they have their reward*, *v.* 5. relating how they disfigured their faces when they faſted, that they might appear to men to faſt, adds the very ſame words again, *verily I ſay unto you they have their reward*, *v.* 16. of the ſame Chapter, that is to ſay, they gain that glory which they ſeek, they are eſteemed as they deſire, the beſt and ſtricteſt ſort of Men, and ſo the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſuggeſts, when he calls this very ſect of the Phariſees, *the ſtricteſt ſect of their Religion*, *Acts* 26. 5. when he reports that they taught according *to the perfect manner of the Law*, *Acts* 22. 3. for here he deſigns not to let us know that the thing it ſelf was ſo indeed, but that it was commonly judged to be ſo: ſo great was their credit among the People, that when ſix thouſand of them refuſed to do what the reſt of the Nation did, ſwear allegiance unto *Cæſar*, and were fined for refuſing ſo to do: The Wife of *Pherotas* (a Rich Man) out of the great opinion ſhe had of their ſingular piety and devotion, was ready to pay the Fine for them, ſhe paid it, and was applauded for it, nay flatter'd with hope

of

of the very Kingdom: they told her God himſelf had decreed that *ſhe*, and *her husband*, and *their iſſue* ſhould have the Government of the Nation, and that he himſelf had aſſured them of it in the communion they had with him, and this their Prophecie was believed upon account of the great reputation of their Piety, *Joſeph. antiq. lib.* 10. *cap.* 3.

Nor muſt you think it a ſtrange thing, that hypocriſie ſhould gain the reputation of true Religion, for I muſt ſay ſomething ſtranger ſtill, namely, that it often gains a greater credit and reputation, at leaſt for a time, than true Religion it ſelf obtains: the reaſons whereof are plain and evident. For,

The Hypocrite makes it his very buſineſs to appear in the viſible ſhew of Piety, takes care that every Religious action appear to the eyes, or come to the knowledge of the World; ſo did the Phariſees give their Alms, ſo did they order their prayers and faſts, that the World might obſerve and underſtand them: whereas the ſincere and true Chriſtian thinks it enough to approve himſelf to God in private, and takes no thought how to commend himſelf to Men, further than by avoiding ſcandal,

ſcandal, and by a true and unaffected diſcharge of duty to God and Men, without the circumſtance of pomp and ſhew, of much appearance in ſo doing.

The Hypocrite again pretends to the very height of Piety, to the greateſt meaſures of perfection, the upright perſon pretends no more than he hath really attain'd unto.

The Hypocrite makes it his great buſineſs to be always ſpeaking of Religion in every place, in every Company, at all times, upon all occaſions, though they be never ſo unſeaſonable; the upright perſon contents himſelf to give Religion its due place, to take convenient opportunities to mention, propagate, and promote it.

The Hypocrite makes it his deſign to ſhew a ſingular zeal and fervour for the ſmalleſt things that relate to Religion, nay things of no concernment in it; the upright perſon is more modeſt, lays no more of ſtreſs on things than the Laws of God or Men require. By all which means it comes to paſs, that the reputation of the hypocrite ſometimes far exceeds that of true, and wiſe, and ſober Chriſtians; which as it may preſs a ſtrong temptation to bewitch

and

and draw Men to that ſin; ſo ſhould it move to the greater watchfulneſs, the greater diligence to avoid it.

2. But then ſecondly, as hypocriſie often gains the credit of true Religion, nay more than that it ſelf can gain in the general blindneſs of mankind: ſo doth it moſt effectually ſerve for the advancement of other ends, which men are apt to entertain, namely, the gaining of wealth and power, and all the advantages of this World.

And here I ſhall not make any ſtay upon meaner perſons, who yet generally find it uſeful for their advantages in the world, to make a ſhew of greater piety, than they are really poſſeſſors of; But I ſhall obſerve to what degrees of power and honour the Phariſees did advance themſelves by their pretences to greater exactneſs in Religion, than other factions amongſt the Jews. *Joſephus* tells us, that there were three ſects of Religion amongſt the Jews in his time, the *Phariſees*, *Saaducees*, and the *Eſſenes:* of theſe the *Eſſenes*, as he tells us, lived the beſt, but the *Phariſees* were of greateſt credit, inſomuch that the very *Sadducees* themſelves, if they arrived to any Authority in the Nation, were forced to accommodate and yield themſelves

ſelves to all the dictates of the Phariſees, *Antiqu. lib.* 10. *cap.* 2. He tells us that theſe were ſo eſteem'd, that they govern'd all in matters of State; that they had ſuch Intereſt in the People, that they were not afraid to reſiſt and oppoſe the lawful Magiſtrates, to oppoſe their very Kings and Princes, and to raiſe Arms, and war againſt them. He tells us a very remarkable ſtory relating to our preſent purpoſe: *Alexander Jannæus*, during his Reign over the Jews, had done many cruel and odious things, and ſome that highly diſpleas'd the Phariſees, and was therefore greatly hated by them as well as by the reſt of the People. In this condition he falls ſick, his ſickneſs at laſt prevailed ſo far, that there was no hope of recovery left. This being obſerved by his Wife *Alexandra*, who knew very well how odious he was to all the People, and to the *Phariſees* amongſt the reſt, and the infinite troubles and vexations that threatned his Family after his death, ſhe is preſently overflowed with ſorrows, as in the proſpect of what ſhe fear'd might happen. Alas ſays ſhe to her dying Husband, what a Condition do you leave us in? to whom do you leave your wretched Widow? to whom

whom do you leave your miſerable Orphans? what ſhall we do when you are gone? Peace, ſays the King, take my advice, and I will put you into a way, wherein you ſhall not only live, but reign in peace and great ſecurity: you know the mighty power and credit that the Phariſees have among the people, for their ſeeming Piety and Religion, you know the hatred I labour under, hath chiefly and principally been occaſioned, becauſe I have diſobliged them. When I am dead, ſpeak them fair, give them the praiſes they deſire, expoſe my body unto them, let them uſe it at their pleaſure, either bury it, if they pleaſe; or abuſe, and inſult, and trample upon it, and drag it through the mire of the Streets. Let them govern all your affairs, let them but govern and rule you, and you ſhall eaſily rule the people. Well, this ſhe did, and doing this the Phariſees were quieted and appeaſed, and they did not only not abuſe, but very honourably interr his Body; they made Orations in the commendation of his Perſon, they ſettled his Widow in the Kingdom by their Authority among the people; they governed her, and ſhe the Kingdom. (*Antiq. lib.* 13. *c.* 23, 24.) Such power

power and intereſt among the people did they obtain by the reputation of their Religion. From whence I obſerve, How powerful a thing the appearance of Religion is to ſerve a mans ſecular ends and intereſts, even beyond real piety.

Now that which gives it this advantage for theſe ends, at leaſt for a certain ſpace of time, till it be diſcovered and detected, is becauſe it gives a man the licence of uſing ſuch methods for his end, which no man truly conſcientious can poſſibly allow himſelf to uſe. It gives him leave to ſay or do, whatſoever it be, that may ſerve his end. It gives him leave to promiſe fair to every perſon, although he never deſign performance; to fill men with infinite expectations of publick good, or their own preferment and advantage, though nothing of theſe things be intended. It gives him leave to apply himſelf to every mans humour and deſire, to flatter the proud, to praiſe the ambitious, to bribe the covetous, to ſerve and careſs every mans luſts, and to accommodate ſuch a Bate for every perſon, as is moſt pleaſing to his Appetite. By all which means it often effectually ſerves its end, before it can be well diſcovered; and then diſcovery doth not hurt it. It hath gained the advantages

tages it deſigned, and, it may be, the reputation of wiſdom, though it hath loſt that of piety.

Now being hypocriſie is an eaſie and a pleaſant Religion, grateful in ſeveral Parts and Inſtances to the ſinful paſſions of Mankind, being apt to ſerve the ſeveral ends of gaining applauſe, and wealth, and power, it will require a ſingular care, a great watchfulneſs over our ſelves to avoid it in all degrees and meaſures, to be infected with nothing of it. It will require the more of this, becauſe a man may be an Hypocrite, and yet not be aware he is ſo; he may be infected with this Diſeaſe, and that in a very high degree, and not be ſenſible of his Malady, not feel and obſerve it in himſelf. 'Tis clear that the very Phariſees themſerves were not aware of their own hypocriſies. Had they been ſo, they could not *have truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and have deſpiſed others*; which Chriſt expreſly ſaith they did, *Luke* 18. 9. Had they been conſcious of their hypocriſies, though they might have boaſted this their righteouſneſs before men, who did not underſtand their hearts, they could not have done it before God, who, as they knew, did underſtand them; and yet our Saviour brings

brings in the Phariſee boaſting of his righteouſneſs before God, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. But they were not conſcious to themſelves of their own hypocriſies: And this is the reaſon why our Lord ſo often upbraided them with their blindneſs. Intereſt is a ſubtle thing, it eaſily inſinuates into mens counſels, eaſily ſlides into their deſigns, and moulds them into a Form of Godlineſs, begets an appearance of Religion, when they are little aware of it. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Jerem. 17. 9.

This being ſo, if we will avoid ſo ſly a vice, if we would exclude ſo ſubtle and ſo deceitful a ſin, it will concern us,

(1.) Firſt of all to avoid the ſeveral cauſes of it, Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition. For lay this down for a certain Rule, Hypocriſie is no ſolitary vice, it is never found alone in any man, it always ſerves ſome other luſt, it always miniſters to ſome ſuperior vice within, that is to ſay, either to the love of the praiſe of men, or that of ſecular wealth and power. If a man deſign not to ſerve theſe luſts, if theſe do not bear any ſway in him, he's in no danger of hypocriſie. For that's a vice that always

miniſters to ſome other, and theſe are the vices which it ſerves.

(2.) And then further it will ſecure us from hypocriſie, if we will fully content our ſelves with thoſe advantages of Religion, which God hath certainly promiſed to it, peace with him, peace of Conſcience in this World, and eternal happineſs in the other. I know very well that true Religion doth often contribute to further ends, namely, both to welfare and reputation in this very world, at well as the other. But becauſe there are certain times and circumſtances, wherein it will not ſerve thoſe ends, wherein the beſt and wiſeſt men ſhall be eſteemed the very worſt, ſuperſtitious, cold and formal men, by thoſe that are zealous in ſome Faction, and know no Religion but that zeal; becauſe ſuch times as theſe may be, it is ſafeſt to content our ſelves in gaining thoſe rewards and bleſſings, that are peculiar to Religion, the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and life eternal in the World to come.

(3.) And then laſtly, Becauſe hypocriſie is ſo deceitful and ſly a ſin, as always ſerving worldly intereſt, which is apt inſenſibly to blind the eyes, and infatuate the minds of the wiſeſt men (and yet

yet hide it ſelf from them themſelves) it will concern us to be very frequent and impartial in the examination of our ſelves, to weigh our counſels, to try our ends, to prove our deſigns in every action relating any way to Religion. It will be needful to conſider whether we indeed deſign it, really intend to promote and practiſe it wherever we make a profeſſion of it. And then becauſe that God alone knows the heart, and becauſe his Grace is moſt needful to diſcover our ſelves unto our ſelves in the midſt of the many ſins and paſſions that may infatuate and beguile us; let us earneſtly pray for his Holy Spirit to deliver us from all the infatuations, and all the ſeductions of our luſts. Let us make the Addreſs which *David* did, (*Pſal.* 139. 23, 24.) with whoſe words I ſhall conclude: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and ſee if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

The Eleventh Sermon.

John 14. 1.

——*Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.*

The whole verſe is thus:

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.

THESE words are a preface to a very large and kind diſcourſe made by our Lord unto his followers, wherein he delivers the main foundations of Chriſtianity as well in matter of Faith, as Practice; which is the reaſon why he begins it with ſuch words, as might effectually ſtir them up to give both attention and belief to all that he ſhould deliver in it: *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.*

In which words we have two parts:

1. A conceſſion, or ſuppoſition, *Ye believe in God*; that is, ye believe that there is a God, and what is conſequent hereupon, that he is to be truſted and obeyed, although ſome others read the words

words not as a Declaration, *Ye believe in God*, but as a Command, *Believe in God*; but there is no reaſon to depart from our own Tranſlation in this matter.

2. Here is a Precept alſo, *Believe in me*; that is to ſay, believe that I am the Son of God, ſent by him into the world to reveal the Goſpel of life eternal; and therefore judge your ſelves obliged to believe whatſoever I reveal, and obey whatſoever I command you.

Now being that belief in Chriſt, in the ſenſe I have now explained unto you, is here required as an addition, or further acceſſion to the mere belief in God only, as he may be known by the light of nature. The Subject which the Words before us offer to our conſideration is, That the belief of Chriſtian Doctrine, as it is revealed to us in the Goſpel, over and above that knowledge of God which the light of Nature affords unto us, is neceſſary to our eternal happineſs. In the proſecution of which Point,

1. I muſt firſt conſider, That the firm belief of the Goſpel of Chriſt is moſt expreſly required by God, and the denial of ſuch belief forbidden under no

leſs a penalty than the utter loſs of life eternal.

Salvation is always promiſed to them who believe in him who hath revealed it, and become his Followers and Diſciples; to other perſons it is not promiſed. *As Moſes lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up; that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, Joh. 3. 14, 15. Nor is it only promiſed to thoſe, and thoſe only, that ſo believe; but denied to them that believe not, to them that refuſe to yield their belief to him whom God hath ſent and ſanctified to be the Saviour of the World. *He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already; becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* And ſo again (omitting ſeveral other places of the ſame ſenſe and ſignification) in the firſt Epiſtle of St *John*, chap. 5. ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in himſelf; he that believeth not God, hath made him a Lyar, becauſe he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son.* Thrice did God bear this Record, and own our Lord to be ſent by him, by an expreſs voice from Heaven, once at his Baptiſm, in theſe words,

Matt.

Matt. 3. 17. *This is my beloved ſon in whom I am well pleaſed.* A ſecond time at his transfiguration upon the mount, with ſome addition to thoſe words, *Matt.* 17. 5. *This is my beloved ſon in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* And yet again a third time, a little before our Saviour's paſſion, when praying to God in theſe words, *Father glorifie thy name*, he was anſwered by a voice from Heaven, *ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again*, John 12. 28. To all which clear and expreſs teſtimonies given by the Father to his Son, I might firſt add the glorious miracles wrought by Chriſt during his life, then his reſurrection from the dead, and the effuſion of his Spirit upon the Apoſtles ſent by him, and all the miracles wrought by them, and all his other followers alſo; which being evident demonſtrations that he was the very ſon of God, and ſent by him to ſave the World, highly aggravate the great ſin of infidelity and unbelief, and teach us to forbear to wonder that it ſhould be puniſhed with death eternal, and that Chriſt himſelf ſhould thus pronounce, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.*

2. But then ſecondly, leſt you ſhould think that God will have us believe the Goſpel meerly becauſe he will have it ſo, and that he had no further end in the truth therein revealed unto us, than that we ſhould believe them only: I further add, that the belief of thoſe truths is greatly neceſſary to ſeveral ends of infinite moment and importance.

1. For the full and perfect knowledge of the duties which he requires from us.

2. For the like knowledge of the great motives to thoſe duties.

3. For our better ſupport under all our tryals, fears, and dangers.

1. The belief of the great truths revealed unto us in the Goſpel, is neceſſary for the perfect knowledge of the duties which God requires from us, and that upon ſeveral conſiderations: namely (1.) becauſe that though the light of nature well improved, may in ſome meaſure direct us to very many of them; yet ſuch improvement of that light is no very eaſie or common thing: and (2.) becauſe there is now a higher meaſure of natural duties required from us, than was accepted in former times, that is, the times before the Goſpel: and (3.) yet again, becauſe

cauſe there are now even other kinds and ſorts of Duties requir'd from us, than the light of Nature can diſcover.

(1.) Therefore let it be well conſidered, that although it be very true indeed, that the light of Nature well improved, may direct and guide us to many Duties, yet ſuch improvement of that light is no ſuch eaſie and common thing. The ſtrong affections that are in men to the gains and pleaſures of this life, allow them but very little time to ſpend in the ſtudy of their Duties, much leſs do they prompt them to that Study. They preſs the gaining of what is eaſie, what is pleaſing to fleſh and blood; they preſs the pleaſing of themſelves in the fruition of what they love, and doing ſo, ſtrangely infatuate the minds of men, and render it infinitely hard and difficult to excite thoſe ſparks of natural light which God hath planted in their minds. Inſomuch that we find by ſad experience, that the generality of mankind in all the Ages of the World have been much apter to extinguiſh than to improve the light of nature. If you conſider the ſtate of the world before the Flood, you find that impurity and iniquity had ſtrangely ſpread and diffuſed themſelves through the generality of

mankind,

Mankind, *God ſaw*, ſays *Moſes*, *that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. Every imagination evil, and only evil, and that continually. If you deſcend below the Flood, how did the very ſame impieties, and theſe with a very great acceſſion, namely with that of Idolatry it ſelf, preſently deluge the World again? How univerſal were theſe impieties, and that Idolatry? Inſomuch that the very ſeed of *Abraham* had learned the manners, learned the Idolatries uſed in *Egypt*, before the giving of the Law, and could not be ſo reſtrained from them, but that they were ever and anon relapſing after the very Law was given, during all the time of the firſt Temple. And though we find them cured indeed of their Idolatry after the *Babylonian* Captivity, yet did they ſtill pollute themſelves with ſtrange immoralities and ſuperſtitions. Inſomuch that when our Saviour came to reform the world, he found it in ſuch a deplorable ſtate, that St. *Paul* thought fit to repreſent it in thoſe words, and many others to the ſame purpoſe out of the Pſalms, *There is none righteous; no not one. There is none*

none that underſtandeth, none that ſeek-eth after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doth good, no not one, Rom. 3. 10, 11, 12. See here into what a wretched ſtate the world was fallen, when our bleſſed Lord was ſent into it; ſee, how little ſucceſs or influence the light of Nature had upon it, either to hinder, or to reform the greateſt impieties and profaneneſs. And leſt you ſhould think the very profeſſors of humane wiſdom, the very Philoſophers among the Greeks, to have been better than the people, I muſt ſay, that it was not generally ſo; but on the contrary, that the generality of theſe perſons were as prophane, and as Idolatrous as the People, and more Atheiſtical than they were. And this is the thing St. *Paul* declares, *Rom.* 1. 22. and the following verſes; *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things*, the very vileſt of the Creatures: *for which cauſe God gave them up to vile affections*, which he largely deſcribes in the following parts of that Chapter. So far was the light of Nature

nature from reſtraining Ideots and mean Perſons, that it did not reſtrain the very Philoſophers from great impieties and ſuperſtitions, no nor from groſs and foul Idolatry, which yet is the greateſt contradiction, the greatlieſt oppoſite to that light.

And it is worthy our obſervation, that there is not now at this very day any heathen Nation in all the world, that doth not worſhip dumb Idols, ſave only thoſe that follow *Mahomet*; and that the reaſon why this very ſect are not Idolaters, is becauſe that *Mahomet* their great Prophet, took the belief of one true God from Chriſtian Doctrine, and becauſe his followers live in the neighbourhood of Chriſtian Nations, and have Chriſtians generally dwelling with them. From all which inſtances it appears, how hard it is ſo to ſecure, ſo to improve the light of nature, as that it ſhall not groſly fail even in the diſcovery of natural duties, unleſs it be helped by Revelation; and therefore how neceſſary, how indiſpenſably needful it is, to believe the Goſpel, for the aſſiſting of that light in the knowledge even of natural duties.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that there are now greater degrees, higher

higher perfection in natural duties required from us, ſince the Revelation of the Goſpel, than were accepted, or required, before the Revelation of it.

Now therefore allowing that natural light, can in a meaſure teach and prompt us to practiſe thoſe two general duties, which conſiſt in the love of *God* and *Men*, and alſo in the diſtinct branches, the ſeveral inſtances of thoſe duties, yet will it be very hard to ſay, that it can either teach, or move us to practiſe all theſe ſeveral offices in thoſe degrees which God doth now require from us: for God requires ſuch a degree of natural duties, that is, of love to himſelf and men, as is proportionable to the helps and motives, which he affords for the performance of theſe duties, *unto whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, Luke 12. 48. Now natural light doth not afford an equal meaſure of help, and motives to natural Duties, with thoſe that are given us by the Goſpel, and therefore it cannot be imagined but that God requires a greater degree of theſe duties, namely, of love to himſelf and men, and of all the branches, all the inſtances of that

that love, than natural light can work in us, than is accepted, or required where the Goſpel is not publiſhed and revealed. Will any man ſay, that the very Goſpel affords no greater helps and motives, for the performance of thoſe duties, which the light of Nature may ſuggeſt, than this alone can offer to us? is the clear relation of life immortal, the expreſs promiſe of that life, and of the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, and the unſpeakable love of God in giving his Son to die for us, nothing more, nothing greater, nothing more powerful or efficacious to perſwade the practice of natural duties, than the very light of Nature only? or doth not God require a greater degree of obedience, where he hath given greater knowledge, and greater abilities to obey him? who can deny either of theſe? and if theſe cannot be denyed, certain it is, that there is now (ſince the Revelation of the Goſpel) a greater degree of natural duties required from men, where that Goſpel is revealed, than was accepted, or required before the Revelation of it.

3. To all this add in the third place, that there are now ſome certain duties enjoyned unto us, which the light of Nature

Nature can in no wiſe diſcover to us: ſuch are the Sacraments of the Goſpel, Baptiſm, and the Supper of our Lord; ſuch is the Worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator, and ſuch no doubt, is the invocation of the Holy, and ever bleſſed Trinity: all which duties purely depend upon Revelation, and are not in any wiſe ſuggeſted by natural light, howſoever improved.

If it be ſaid, that theſe duties are not required, where the Goſpel is not revealed and publiſhed, this is no anſwer, no excuſe for thoſe perſons, who live where the Goſpel is revealed. They are required to practiſe theſe as well as any natural duties, and ſure the wilful neglect of them is wilful diſobedience to God; and therefore renders the guilty perſon liable to death eternal; from all which inſtances it appears, that a belief in Jeſus Chriſt, a full belief of his Goſpel is abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary for the full and perfect underſtanding of the duties which God requires from us.

2. And ſecondly it is equally neceſſary for the clear, and full, and perfect knowledge of the great Motives to thoſe duties; namely (1.) that of eternal life, and (2.) the admirable love of

of God to men declared and evidenced in Jeſus Chriſt, and (3.) the expreſs and clear promiſes of the aſſiſtance of his Spirit to enable us to perform our Duties.

1. Certainly the promiſe of life eternal, upon condition of Faith and Holineſs, is the higheſt Motive to obedience; but ſuch a motive, as is ſo far from being clear to the light of Nature, that there was a ſect amongſt the Jews (who had not only the light of nature, but the Law and Prophets to inform them) that is to ſay the ſect of the Sadducees, who denyed the being of Angels or Spirits, and the immortality of mens Souls.

Nor was there any one ſect amongſt the Philoſophers, but either flatly denyed this, as the Epicureans, and ſome others; or elſe ſpake doubtfully in the point, as the Academicks or thoſe of *Plato*'s School, or had infinitely falſe, as well as uſeleſs conceptions of it, as the Pythagoreans had of old, who held the tranſmigration of mens Souls out of one body into another, yea into the bodies of brute Creatures, ſo that this chief and principal motive to obedience, the very immortality of mens Souls, much more that of their bodies alſo, was either

ther doubted, or disbeliev'd, or elſe believ'd in ſuch a manner, as rendered it uſeleſs to that end amongſt the wiſeſt of the Heathen. And as for the common ſort of People, who were led by the fictions of the Poets, thoſe did at beſt no more than fancy a ſenſual Paradiſe after death; which could no more purge and cleanſe them from ſenſual appetites, than the hope and deſire of a carnal happineſs, can make men holy, pure, and ſpiritual.

2. But then further, what ſhall we ſay of the incomparable love and kindneſs, that God hath declared to mankind in the Goſpel of our bleſſed Lord? which all the skill of humane wiſdom, the moſt improved natural light could never have diſcovered or imagined? That God ſhould ſend his beloved Son into the world, to take our nature upon himſelf, and reveal eternal life to men, and ſhew them the way to attain unto it by the example of his life! that he ſhould give him to die for us, to make expiation for our ſins! that he ſhould raiſe him from the dead, and give him power to raiſe us, and make our very Redeemer himſelf to become our Head, and give him authority to be our Judg, who knows our frailties by his own

experience and ſenſe of them, are demonſtrations of ſuch an incomparable love to us, ſuch a concern for our ſalvation, as would never have entred into the thoughts of mortal men, had it not been thus revealed unto us. Theſe were myſteries hid from Ages, diſcoveries of a greater love than natural light could have imagined, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Herein is love*, ſaith St *John*, 1 Ep. 4. 10. *not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* And ſo St *Paul*, Rom. 5. 8. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us.* Now the Goſpel having clearly revealed infinitely more of the love of God to mankind, than the light of nature could diſcover, hath likewiſe given us infinitely greater and ſtronger motives to love God, and truſt in him, and conſequently to obey him, than the light of nature could afford.

3. Add hereunto the expreſs promiſe, which God made us in the Goſpel, of giving his holy Spirit to us, to ſtrengthen our faith, to confirm our hope, to inflame

inflame our love, to enable us to perform the Duties which we cannot perform by the ſtrength of nature. So our Saviour, *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Could all the skill of humane wiſdom, or the beſt improved natural light, give us ſuch aſſurance of God's aſſiſtance in order to a holy life, as this expreſs Promiſe gives us? Did the Philoſophers ever ſpeak at this rate? Did they dream of Divine aſſiſtance to make them wiſe, and juſt, and holy? What ſaith *Tully* in the name of *Cotta* on this Point? *lib.* 3. *de natura Deor. Virtutem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit*; No man ever judged he had Vertue from God. And afterwards, *Nunquis quòd bonus vir eſſet, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quòd dives, quòd honoratus, quòd incolumis.* Did ever any man thank the Gods, becauſe he was a good man? No, but becauſe he was rich, and honourable, and ſafe. Theſe were the things they aſcribed to God, but they never dreamed of his aſſiſtance to give them Vertue; that they aſcribed unto themſelves.

Now how could men that never ex-

pected God's assistance in the purifying of their hearts and lives, ever attempt to arrive at equal degrees of piety with those that expect and verily hope for that assistance? How could they hope to overcome their inordinate lusts and inclinations? or, whatsoever they might hope, how could they really overcome them without the assistance of God's Spirit? which was a thing they did not only not expect, but flatly rejected and denied, judged it absurd to look for it.

Whereas now on the other hand, the firm assurance of a supernatural power and help, to subdue the corruptions of our natures, grounded upon the promise of God, gives those that really believe the Gospel, such faith and hope, and strength and courage, which gives them victory over the World, and their own inordinate lusts and appetites. From all which instances it appears how many singular helps and motives the Gospel gives us in order to a holy Life, which the light of nature cannot give; and consequently that it is most necessary to believe the Gospel over and above all the Principles which the light of nature can discover.

3. Add hereunto in the third place, That as this is necessary for the perfect know-

knowledge of our Duties, and the helps and motives thereunto; ſo likewiſe for our ſupport and comfort under all the tryals, fears and troubles that aſſault us in the preſent world; whether thoſe ariſe from, (1.) Outward evils; or, (2.) From inward guilt and fear of puniſhment.

(1.) And for the former: *Man*, ſays *Job*, *is born for trouble as the ſparks fly upward*; that is to ſay, The ſtate of man is naturally troubleſome in this world. So many are the afflictions and tryals which fall upon us in this life, ſo many the dangers or diſappointments, ſo many loſſes and calamities in our names, or perſons, or eſtates, or in the perſons related to us, which ſour and imbitter the preſent world, that there is nothing can ſupport us, and make our lives eaſie to us, but the firm aſſurance and expectation of a bleſſed and glorious immortality, which, as I have clearly ſhewed before, was never found among the Heathen, never clearly known by the light of nature. Could they then ſo enjoy themſelves in all the confuſions, in all the calamities of this world, they, who had no aſſured hope of immortality, as we may do, that have that hope? or as the Primitive Chriſti-

ans did? *We are troubled*, ſays the Apoſtle, *on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. Not deſtroyed? no, we do not faint, we do not languiſh under our troubles; ſo he adds at the 16. *verſe*, and would you know how they were ſupported, how ſuſtained under all their tryals, perſecutions? that appears from the firſt words of the following Chapter. *We know, that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building with God, a houſe not made with hands eternal in the heavens.* And this it was, this certain knowledge, this which the light of nature wants, which gave ſupport and comfort to them under all their ſufferings, and afflictions.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that the light of nature can never give men that aſſurance of the grace and favour of God towards them, and the remiſſion of their ſins, which the Goſpel moſt expreſly gives: and therefore never ſo ſupport us under the fears and ſenſe of guilt, as the declarations of the Goſpel.

The Goſpel aſſures us, that God ſent his beloved Son *to be the propitiation for our*

our ſins, 1 John 4. 10. The Goſpel aſſures us, that the Son of *God appear'd in the preſence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24. that he interceeds a Prieſt for us. The Goſpel tells us, that he will continue ſo to do, ſo to interceed for *ever*, and that is ſ interceſſion for us is moſt prevalent for our Salvation; that *he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them*, Heb. 7. 25. And that he is not able only, but alſo willing ſo to do, as being a *merciful and faithful High Prieſt*, Heb. 2. 17. upon which account we are exhorted to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. 4. 16. And are not theſe expreſs declarations of the mighty efficacy of Chriſts Sacrifice to make atonement for our ſins, and of his interceſſion for us to commend us to the favour of God, infinitely great ſupports to us, under our fears of guilt and puniſhment? Or could the very light of nature give ſuch aſſurance of Gods mercy to mankind as Gods expreſs promiſe gives? The light of nature could never give us that aſſurance. It did indeed convince men of their ſin and guilt, and of the danger

of Gods diſpleaſure thence ariſing; and therefore laboured to attone, and to remove divine diſpleaſure by many Sacrifices and Oblations, yea by the blood of humane Sacrifices; but ſtill, alas! left the Offerers under great confuſions and uncertainties: whereas God hath clearly and expreſly declared himſelf reconciled to us by the ſpotleſs Sacrifice of his Son.

Having thus ſhewed the abſolute neceſſity of believing what the Goſpel reveals over and above, what the light of nature can diſcover, Let us hence obſerve the ſin and danger of thoſe perſons, who pretend indeed to believe in God, but not in him whom God hath ſent to be the Redeemer of the World.

1. They reject the *Lord of Life* and glory, whom God hath made the very judge of the quick and dead, to whom he hath given all Authority in Heaven and Earth. They reject the head of that body to which alone Salvation is promiſed, for there is *no name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved*, but that of Chriſt, *Acts* 4. 12. And *he that believeth not on the Son ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. 36.

2. Nor

2. Nor can it reaſonably be pretended, that the light of Nature affords the ſame helps and motives to make men righteous, good, and holy, which the very Goſpel it ſelf affords. There is nothing falſer, nothing vainer than that pretence, as I have already clearly ſhewed. Nor do thoſe men who do pretend to believe in God, but yet refuſe to believe in Chriſt, refuſe this upon other reaſons, but only becauſe the Laws of Chriſt are too ſevere, and holy for them: they will not do what he commands, and therefore will not believe the Goſpel; nor would they pretend to obey the very light of nature, ſave only becauſe by theſe means they gain a liberty of doing as little as they pleaſe; for if you reprove them for any ſin, their anſwer is, that it is not ſo by the light of nature. They make that light to be what they pleaſe, and then do what they pleaſe alſo, pretending the light of nature allows it.

But let all thoſe, who would not ruin their precious Souls, who do indeed, and good earneſt, deſire eternal life and happineſs, fully and faithfully believe the Goſpel; believe in him, who hath thereby *brought life and immortality*

immortality to light, who hath offered himſelf as a ſpotleſs Sacrifice to make expiation of their ſins, who, as he is now in Gods preſence making interceſſion for his body; ſo will appear to the World again at the laſt day, and reward men according to their works. Let us all ſtedfaſtly believe in him, the only begotten Son of God, *for he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*, 1 John 5. 12.

The

The Twelfth Sermon.

Philip 1. 10.

That ye may approve things that are excellent.

ALthough God, in his infinite wiſdom, never enjoined any thing to men, but what, conſidering all circumſtances of times, and places, and perſons likewiſe, was uſeful and convenient for them, though indifferent in its own nature (ſuch were the numerous Rites and Ceremonies of *Moſes*'s Law;) yet are there other inſtances of Duty,) which are immutably good in themſelves, and therefore proper for all Ages. So are theſe two general Duties, to *love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbour as our ſelves.* So are the particular Branches of them, *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly* in the world. And ſo, with very little exception, are all the Duties of the Goſpel. Which, impartially tryed and weighed, cannot

not but be approved as good, even by them that do not practiſe them.

But a general aſſent of the underſtanding, not applied to particular inſtances of life and action, is far ſhort of the *approbation*, which the Apoſtle here deſigns. For although the word δοκιμάζειν, uſed in the Greek, ſometimes ſignifie ſomething leſs than a bare aſſent of the underſtanding, that is, to *try* and *examine* only, as where it is required that we *prove all things*, (1 *Theſſ.* 5. 21.) yet here it ſignifies much more. Here, as alſo in other places, it imports ſuch a clear and ſetled judgment of what is good, as is accompanied with reſolution to practiſe what we judge to be ſo. This appears from what the Apoſtle joins in the ſame period with it, ſincerity and a blameleſs life; and theſe retain unto the end. For ſo is the tenour of his words, *That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be ſincere and without offence 'till the day of Chriſt.* The ſame appears from the Style wherein the Apoſtle ſpeaks. For the words of my Text are part of a Prayer, wherein (after his uſual cuſtom of ſaluting the perſons to whom he writes, *ver.* 1. and praying *grace* and *peace* for them *from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus*

ſus Chriſt, ver. 2.) after his thanks rendred to God for their *fellowſhip in the Goſpel*, in the following verſes of the Chapter, he further prays that their *love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment*, and *that they might approve things that are excellent*. Being then the Apoſtle prays this for them as a thing of ſingular concernment to them, and being a cold aſſent of mind, an ineffectual approbation of what is excellent, is a thing of no concern at all, this cannot poſſibly be the thing which he ſo heartily prays for them; but what is far more than this, ſuch an approbation of the mind as (upon a full and clear ſurvey of all the differences of good and evil in their natures, iſſues and effects, both in this and the other world) ends in a certain determination never to deviate from what is good.

So then, taking this for granted (which the Apoſtle here ſuppoſes) that the things preſcribed to us in the Goſpel, are things excellent, and good for us, worthy to be commanded by God, and reaſonable to be practiſed by us, eſpecially upon the powerful motives, whereupon the Goſpel recommends them; the proper ſubject which theſe words offer unto

to our consideration is the approbation of these things, that is, a *clear* and *stable Judgment* in the Duties prescribed to us in the Gospel. In the handling of which Subject, it is most fit that we consider,

1. The singular use and advantage of such a judgment in those Duties.
2. How it may be gained.
3. And lastly, How it must be exercised by them that have attained unto it.

1. And for the first let it be considered, That the judgment which I have now described is of such singular use to us, that it is,

(1.) Both an effectual cure of all the Diseases of our minds, considered absolutely in themselves; and,

(2.) Also a constant Guide and Monitor in every instance of our lives. First, A Guide to discover our Duties to us; and, Secondly, A Monitor to press the practice of them, and steady perseverance in that practice, whatsoever may tempt us to the contrary.

(1.) If we survey the several maladies of our minds, the diseases of humane understanding, there are,

First, Ignorance.
Secondly, Doubt; and
Thirdly, Vanity.

Ignorance

Ignorance of what is true and uſeful, or *Scepticiſm* and doubt in what is ſo, or *Vanity* in applying our minds to things impertinent and uſeleſs to us, though we may have certain knowledge of them.

Firſt, The firſt Diſeaſe of the underſtanding is ignorance of that which is truly good. For as the knowledge of what is ſo, is the proper perfection of the mind, becauſe it was made to know this (and every thing is perfect in its end;) ſo the ignorance of what it was made to know, is its greateſt malady and imperfection. Ignorance is that Diſeaſe in the mind which utter blindneſs is in the eye, that imperfection in the underſtanding which darkneſs would be in the Sun and Stars. 'Tis that which Death is unto Life, its proper ruine and deſtruction. It hides the face of truth from us, it eclipſes all the luſtre of goodneſs, it puts us under the power of errour, which vitiates and perverts our choice, and doth not only lead to danger, but alſo reconcile us to it.

Now juſt contrary to theſe effects are thoſe of clear and ſtable judgment, in things pertaining to life and happineſs, or (as the Apoſtle's expreſſion is) of the *approbation of things excellent*. Truth is

is to the mind as light to the Sun, its proper luſtre, and perfection. Beſides it powerfully recommends, and ſets off every thing that's good, it ſhews it in its native colours, and gives it the advantages due unto it, ſo that (to uſe the Apoſtles words, *Philip.* 4. 8.) *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if there be any praiſe,* whatſoever there is that deſerves our love, it is ſo repreſented in the mind, when the mind is duly informed by truth, that it commends itſelf to choice, and gains the poſſeſſion of our hearts: for as we naturally deſire and love, what our minds recommend unto us, as good in it ſelf, and for us likewiſe; ſo the hearty love of what is good, is the gaining the very thing we love; for there is this remarkable difference between the love of good, or evil, and that of all other things in the world, that we may love theſe other things, and yet fall ſhort of the things themſelves; but he that loves good or evil, is good or evil by ſo doing. The conſequence of which diſcourſe is this, that the approbation

probation of things exellent, a clear and ſtable judgment in them, is not only the cure of Ignorance, the firſt diſeaſe of the underſtanding; but, what is more than I ſaid at firſt, a powerful and a ſoveraign medicine to the diſtempers of our wills, to all our inordinate luſts, and paſſions.

Secondly, Let us now proceed to the ſecond Malady of our minds, from which it is a like deliverance, and that is Scepticiſm, and ſuſpence in things both evident, and uſeful to us; for general aſſurance, and general doubt, to believe every thing, and nothing at all, are equal diſtempers of the mind, although of very different kinds; the one proceeding from vain confidence, the other from the weak ſuſpicions of a ſhattered, and broken underſtanding. There are ſome men, that can make themſelves believe any thing, even that their ſenſes are deceived, though duly applyed to their proper objects; and yet pretend the proof of this from a Doctrine which (being grounded on miracle, the proper object of our ſenſes) is grounded upon the truth of ſenſe. So do they, that believe the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation; others had rather deceive themſelves by the

Sophiſtry of their own wits in nice and uncertain ſpeculations, than content, or own themſelves to be Ignorant in things, the knowledge whereof is uſeleſs. But then as it cannot be denied, that this is a levity of underſtanding, to pretend certainty in things uncertain: So is it a more unhappy weakneſs, and a greater crazineſs of underſtanding, to doubt and ſuſpend in thoſe things, which are both evident, and uſeful likewiſe. A man may doubt in things impertinent to life and happineſs without any danger, or fear either; becauſe he neither really is, nor judges himſelf concerned in them: but if he be doubtful in thoſe things, wherein his greateſt concernments lie; if he queſtion the difference of good and evil, if he call Divine Revelation in queſtion, if he doubt of the very truth of the Goſpel, if he ſcruple what Chriſt hath brought to light, eternal life, and imortality; if he be under ſuſpenſe, and fear what is the way to life immortal; if he queſtion what he ſhall be hereafter, happy, or miſerable, or neither of both, that is, as the very brute that periſhes; if he be held in ſuſpenſe, and doubt of ſuch important things as theſe; what reelings and fluctuations of mind, what anxieties and

and pangs of heart, what irreſolution in life and practice, muſt theſe uncertainties bring upon him? This is part of that very bondage, from which our Saviour came to free us, *who was made partaker of fleſh and blood, that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time ſubject to bondage*, Heb. 2. 15. Which very deliverance Chriſt hath wrought by the clear diſcovery, and certain proof of life eternal, and all the means of attaining to it; for ſo hath he given us a firm foundation of clear, and certain, and ſtable judgment both in our *duties*, and *rewards*: and ſo delivered the minds of men from the bondage of ſuſpenſe and doubt in their only true and great concernments.

Thirdly, Now for the vanity of the mind in applying it ſelf to uſeleſs things, the laſt diſeaſe of the underſtanding; this alſo is effectually cured by the *approbation* of *things excellent*, that is to ſay, by ſound judgment in all our duties, and rewards, for ſuch a judgment cannot fail to divert our thoughts from needleſs things, from vain ſpeculations, from idle ſubtilties, from trivial queſtions, from angry contentions, and diſputes

ſputes about impertinent and uſeleſs things; the itch whereof hath been an epidemical diſeaſe in the minds and underſtandings of men in moſt ages, and profeſſions; in the Philoſophers among the heathen, in the Phariſees among the Jews, in the Schoolmen among the Chriſtians; to ſay nothing of the Mahometan impoſture, which is a trifle from beginning to end: multitudes of Volumes have been written upon impertinent and trivial ſubjects, multitudes of Libraries have been filled with troubleſome and unuſeful rubbiſh, with the ruines of humane underſtanding, for all the vanity we find in books was firſt of all in the minds of men.

It was the complaint of one of the greateſt of the heathen, that all the Philoſophers before *Socrates* imployed their ſtudies in the ſpeculation of thoſe things, which were of very ſmall concernment; and did not only all that while neglect the culture of life and manners, but left the very things they ſtudied in the ſame obſcurity, they found them in. *Socrates* indeed made an attempt to transfer knowledge from uſeleſs things into the lives and manners of men, and certainly the attempt was great, but the ſucceſs was not ſuch, but that

that ſtill many profeſſours of wiſdom miſpent their ſtudies in uſeleſs trifles and obſcurities; the knowledge whereof made no man better, nor ignorance any man ever the worſe.

The ſame diſeaſe hath long reign'd among the Jews; thoſe of their writings that are moſt trifling, *fable* in *hiſtory*, and *tattle* in *diſpute* (ſo is their very *Talmud* it ſelf) are moſt of all valued amongſt them. This firſt began amongſt the Phariſees, and was ſo infectious in that Nation, and ſo difficult to be removed, when it had once ſeized the mind, that ſeveral Proſelytes to Chriſtianity abuſed themſelves, and troubled others with *fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions and ſtrivings about the law*, which the Apoſtle reprehends as *unprofitable and vain*, Tit. 3. 9. Theſe are the men whom he deſcribes, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. who were *proud, knowing nothing, doting about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmizings, perverſe diſputings of men of currupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth:* where, by the way, we may obſerve, that they that made the greateſt pretence of ſtriving for *truth*, loſt *piety*, nay *truth* it ſelf, while they pretended to ſtrive for it.

Now I will not ſay, that the ſame duſt hath been raiſed by the Schoolmen among the Chriſtians, that the ſame vanity and curioſity hath had all the ſame effects. But this, I think, I may aver, that whatſoever wit the Schoolmen ſhew in the ſubjects whereupon they treat, the choice of many of thoſe ſubjects demonſtrates a ſtrange want of judgment.

But to what purpoſe is this diſcourſe? To clear the uſe, to ſhew the neceſſity of ſound judgment in the things the Apoſtle ſtyles *excellent*, in things pertinent to life, and happineſs: which very judgment is in it ſelf an effectual cure of all this vanity of underſtanding, that diverts the mind from its proper food; from ſolid, uſeful, pertinent truth, from the knowledge of God, and of our ſelves, to trivial diſputes, and ſpeculations, which, after all a man's pains and ſtudies, leave his mind vain and empty, his temper proud, and ſupercilious, and his life (for any thing gained by them) utterly unreform'd, and vitious. So is not he that ſtedily *approves the things that are excellent*; for the very excellency of theſe things throughly digeſted and approved, clears his thoughts, and feeds his mind, and calms his affections, and corrects exorbitant

bitant heat, and paſſion, and powerfully moves and inclines the Soul to ſobriety, patience, and humility. So is the third diſeaſe of the mind, its vanity in uſeleſs ſpeculations, together with the effects hereof, perfectly cured by ſound judgment in things *excellent*, and worthy knowledge.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that the ſame judgment is a *conſtant guide*, and *faithful monitor* to all our duties, in every inſtance of life, and action.

1. A guide it is, that points out the way to life eternal through all the varieties and uncertainties, that perplex the minds, and pervert the practices of them that want it: a guide it is, that doth not ſtoop to groundleſs dictates, that is not frighted with bold *Anathema*'s, nor yet miſled by ſoft perſwaſions, by fair pretences or ſhews of Piety; no mans confidence ſhall amuſe it, no mans zeal impoſe upon it. If it be ſaid, *loe here is Chriſt*, here an unerring way to life: If it be ſaid on the other hand, no, he is not there, but here; there is nothing but impoſture under the name of infallibility, nothing but Vanity and Superſtition under a maſk of external piety. But here is the ſpi-

rit of Jeſus Chriſt, here is his Doctrine truly preached, here are his Ordinances pure and intire without humane mixtures, and inventions; he that hath clear and ſtable judgment in the things, the Apoſtle ſtiles excellent, knows what to believe, and what to practice in the midſt of all this noiſe, and clamour. He is not put upon demurrs, firſt to doubt, and then to put off, and delay his duty, till intereſt, paſſion, or example, till the hopes or fears of the preſent world prejudice, and beguile his judgment; much leſs by a miſtaken zeal to purſue a *crime* inſtead of a *duty*, and think he is doing God ſervice, when he is violating Gods Laws, breaking the peace of a Church, or State, or cenſuring thoſe, whom he ought to honour. Such is the ſingular help we have from the approbation of things excellent, from ſtable judgment in all theſe things. It is a conſtant guide unto us to ſhew us what our duties are in every inſtance of life, and action.

2. Nor is it only a ready guide, but a faithful monitor to theſe duties: for judgment inform'd by practical truth is one and the ſame thing with conſcience, and conſcience is θεὸς ἔνοικος, *conſcience is a domeſtick God*, conſcience is Gods vicegerent

vicegerent in us, which both declares our duties to us, and powerfully preſſes us to obedience. No man offends it, but wounds himſelf, no man follows it, but finds content in ſo doing: whence that practice of St. *Paul* recorded in his own words, *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf to have always a Conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

And certainly did we take a ſurvey of all the ſeveral conſiderations, that recommend our duties to us, and then ſo fix theſe conſiderations in our thoughts, as to turn them into a ſtable judgment, this would ſo confirm and ſtrengthen us in the choice, and practice of what is good, as that neither the hopes nor fears, the charms, nor dreads of the preſent World ſhould move us to a wilful ſin.

Let a man conſider that his duties are made to be ſo by the Laws of God, who, having made us out of nothing, hath made himſelf our Sovereign Lord by ſo doing, and being ſo, hath all Authority to command us. Let him conſider that theſe Laws are good, and excellent in themſelves, as highly tending to the welfare both of Societies, and ſingle perſons. Let him conſider with what variety of application God recommends our duties to us, how he exhorts, invites,

invites, and intreats, how he expoſtulates, and reaſons with us, how he upbraids, and chides our folly in many places of the Scripture. Let him conſider what he hath done, and what he hath promiſed to do hereafter, that he may perſwade us to obedience, that he hath given his Son to die for us, to redeem us both from ſin, and puniſhment, and promiſed his grace to aſſiſt obedience, and eternal happineſs to reward it: And having conſider'd all theſe things, and digeſted the conſideration of them into a firm and ſetled judgment, can we imagine that ſuch a judgment ſhall not perſwade a free choice and ready practice of every thing thus recommended to him?

Eſpecially if he ſhall further conſider, what are the principles within himſelf, and what the temptations alſo without, that urge him to reject his Duty: and what unhappy and ſad effects attend the wilful rejection of it.

The principles within, that corrupt our choice, and practice too, are (as St. *John* himſelf hath told us, 1 *John* 2. 16.) *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the Eyes, and the pride of life*, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs, and ambition: infatuations as well as ſins, and torments as well as infatua-

fatuations; eſpecially in their effects and iſſues, in the cares, and Envyings, and Animoſities, which they kindle upon the minds of men. The temptations that move theſe vain deſires are bodily pleaſures, ſecular riches, and the eſteem of vain men (for none but ſuch can value a proud ambitious perſon:) Theſe are the things, even theſe which are not ſatisfactions to the mind of the meaneſt man in the World, theſe which bring regrets and pangs, cares, and anxieties, death and miſery along with them, that tempt us to forſake our duties: Theſe are the things that offer themſelves in recompence for the loſs of innocence, the loſs of holineſs and true righteouſneſs, the very Image of God himſelf: Theſe are the things that offer themſelves in recompence for the loſs of peace of Conſcience, of God's favour, and the care of his good Providence over us. Nay theſe are the things that preſent themſelves in exchange for our immortal Souls, the loſs whereof cannot be made up by gaining the whole world it ſelf; *for what ſhall it profit a man*, ſaith our Saviour, *if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* Mark 8. 36, 37.

So

So then let a man take an exact ſurvey of all that recommends his duty, and of all that moves him to forſake it. And then compare 'em both together; and the compariſon will be thus:

On one hand there is the law of God, who hath all Authority to command him, on the other his own extravagant paſſions, urging him to forſake that Law; on one hand behold all the vertues, all the graces of Chriſtianity, that is to ſay, all the perfections of humane nature; on the other all its ſins, and follies, all its degeneracies, and decays: On one hand there are ſtable joys, peace of Conſcience, peace with God, and aſſurance of his grace and favour; on the other muddy and fleeting pleaſures, mixt with abundance of regrets: on the one hand clear and ſetled hopes of future life, and immortality; on the other want of theſe hopes, nay the fears and dreads of eternal miſery.

Now when a man makes this compariſon, when he clearly diſcerns, and firmly judges of all theſe things, as the compariſon repreſents them, when he applies this judgment to every inſtance of life and action, is it not an effectual principle to reſtrain him from every wilful ſin, to urge, and

preſs

preſs him to every duty? will he chuſe what is no way recommended? and refuſe what is repreſented to him under all the motives to choice, and practice?

No man chuſes, or doth amiſs, but he that is ignorant, or forgetful either in the nature of good, and evil, or in the effects and iſſues of them. If there be nothing of this in the caſe, let the charms of the World entice to evil, he knows they are deceits and vanities, and cannot believe what he knows is falſe, nor be cheated by what he doth not believe. Let the dreads and calamities of the world encumber and perplex his duties, he *reckons* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. This gives him courage, ſtrength, and patience, and makes him chuſe afflicted innocence, rather than guilty, and ſhort proſperity. Inſomuch that all the great examples of the higheſt and the nobleſt virtues, all theſe victories over the World, and all its troubles and adverſities, that are recorded in Sacred Hiſtory, all the great things that have been done, all the great things that have been ſuffered for the advancement of Truth and Piety, have

ſprung

ſprung from a ſetled reſolution (grounded upon ſtable judgment) never to vary from God's will, and the way to everlaſting happineſs. So *Moſes eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures of Ægypt*, Heb. 11. 26. So Chriſt himſelf *for that joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. 12. 2. And ſo did his firſt and faithful followers (for the ſecuring of their innocence, and the rewards thereunto belonging) patiently endure all their ſufferings, as knowing that their *light affliction, which was but for a moment, wrought for them a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Thus is the approbation of things excellent that is, a clear and ſtable judgment in all the duties of the Goſpel as there declared, and recommended, not only a perfect cure and remedy of all the diſeaſes of our minds, to wit, Ignorance, Doubt, and Vanity, but alſo a conſtant guide and monitor in the whole courſe of our lives in the World. Which being ſo,

2. Let us now conſider what are the means of attaining to it, the ſecond head before propounded.

1. And here I ſhall not need to ſay, that

that ſince *every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights* (Jam. 1. 17.) it muſt be ſought of God by Prayer: Men may be rich, and great, and powerful, meerly by the permiſſion of Providence, by practices not allow'd by God, by fraud, and injury, and oppreſſion. But no man is wiſe unto Salvation but by the ſpecial grace of God, nor doth he give this ſpecial grace, but where it is diligently ſought of him, which was the reaſon why St. *Paul* ſo often puts it into his Prayers, that God would bleſs men with this wiſdom. So he prays for *Timothy* that *God would give him underſtanding in all things*, 2 Tim. 2. 7. for the *Epheſians*, *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Father of glory, would give unto them the ſpirit of wiſdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him*, Epheſ. 1. 17. for the *Coloſſians*, that *they might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom, and ſpiritual underſtanding*, Col. 1. 9. and laſtly for the *Philippians* here, *that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that they might approve the things that are excellent*: from all which prayers to God for wiſdom, for ſound judgment in all our duties,

as

as repreſented in the Goſpel, we learn that it is the gift of God, and to be ſought by fervent Prayer, eſpecially ſeeing that God hath promiſed to give his ſpirit to them that ask him, and that in a promiſe confirmed by an argument drawn from common and known experience: for ſo is that *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

2. Nor ſhall I need to put you in mind, that to our Prayers for the illumination of God's grace, ſomething of induſtry muſt be joyned, in the ſtudy both of our duties themſelves, and the motives that recommend them to us: And yet, in truth, both theſe things are partly ſo written upon our hearts, and, ſince the revelation of the Goſpel, ſo expreſly declared to us, that we need not weary or waſte our bodies, nor vex and torment our underſtanding to gain the knowledge of either of them. We need not now, as St. *Paul* tells us, *ſay in our hearts who ſhall aſcend into Heaven? That is to bring down Chriſt from above*, to reveal the mind of God to us?

us? *Or, who ſhall deſcend into the deep, that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead*, that he may confirm that Revelation? both theſe things are already done, ſo that now, as the apoſtle adds, *Rom.* 10. 8, 9. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Where we ſee the Apoſtle takes it for granted, that he that firmly believed the Goſpel, could ſcarce fail in the very practice, much leſs in the knowledge and approbation of what is neceſſary to ſalvation; ſo clearly are all our duties revealed, and ſo effectually recommended in the Goſpel.

3. So that what is now mainly requiſite to gain a clear and ſtable judgment in the good and perfect will of God, is ſo much antecedent probity, ſo much ſincerity towards God, as that we are willing to do his will, when it ſhall be made known unto us: and wonder not that this ſhould be requiſite for the gaining of ſtable

judgment in it; for this is no more, than the very belief that there is a God, may produce in every man ſo believing.

If a man have nothing of inclination to do Gods will when he ſhall know it, why ſhould God reveal it to him? or, ſuppoſing (what is ſo indeed) that he hath revealed it in the Goſpel; yet how unapt a man is to believe what he is reſolved not to practiſe? and what, if believed, and not practiſed, will be a perpetual anguiſh to him. How eaſie is it in this caſe, when the intereſts of powerful luſts and paſſions, bribe and corrupt the underſtanding, for a man to prevaricate with himſelf, and baffle, and cheat his own mind?

But where there are honeſt inclinations to do Gods will in caſe it be known and underſtood, theſe open the eye of the underſtanding, theſe let the light of truth into it, and ſo our Saviour tells the Jews, *John* 7. 17. *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* He ſhall rightly judge of it. For ſuch is the nature of Chriſtianity, ſo holy and excellent in it ſelf, ſo clearly delivered, and confirm'd, that want

want of will to obey the Doctrine, and that where there are moſt cogent motives to produce that very will in us, is the only cauſe of want of faith, and judgment in it. So powerful an inſtrument is the Goſpel to produce a clear and ſtable judgment in all things excellent in themſelves, and requiſite to our eternal happineſs.

3. Now the method of uſing ſuch judgment (which is the laſt of thoſe particulars which I propounded to be conſidered) lies in the application of it to every deliberate deſign and action, in every circumſtance of our lives, and in firm purpoſes and reſolutions never to ſtray or vary from it: As having taken it up at firſt, when our minds were clear, and free from prejudice, and that upon ſuch grounds and reaſons, as nothing ſhould ſhake, or alter it in us; not all the Sophiſtry of our luſts, not all the ſeductions of temptation, not all the allurements of ill example; not all the advantages, nor all the calamities of the World.

And therefore whenſoever we do incline to ſtray and deviate from that judgment, which we have before fixt, and ſetled, as the beſt and wiſeſt prin-

ciple of life, whenſoever we find thoſe reſolutions, which that Judgment did produce, begin to ſhake, and waver in us, we muſt remember (what is moſt certain) that we are then under a temptation; that every temptation is a lie, a meer ſeduction, and impoſture, *for every man is tempted* (ſaith St *James*) *when he is drawn aſide by his own luſt, and enticed*, (Jam. 1. 14.) courted to injure his own Soul: for ſo it follows in the next words. *Then when luſt hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death.*

If therefore temptation gild the ſin with the luſtre of wealth, and power, and honour, with the ſhew of ſafety, eaſe, and pleaſure, we muſt remember that all this gloſs that ſeems to ſhine on the face of evil, is but the cheat of our own fancies, the dream of vain imagination; we muſt remember that time will come, when all this varniſh will melt away, and then will things appear again, as they are in themſelves, and their true effects, and as we before judged of them. And why ſhould we change our minds, and judgments, when there is no change in the things themſelves? why ſhould we alter our reſoluti-

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ons, while the things reſolved are equally good, equally neceſſary, as they were at that very time and moment, when we firſt took up thoſe reſolutions?

On the other hand, if the temptation, that ſets a gloſs on the face of evil, miſrepreſent our duties to us, as hard and difficult to be performed, as prejudicial to our contents, as dangerous to our Eſtates, or intereſts in the world; we muſt remember that theſe ſuggeſtions proceed from mean deſires and fears, that theſe infatuate and darken Counſel, that if we hearken and yield to them, we ſhall loſe that which is infinitely better than all the advantages, all the pleaſures of the world, and ſuffer that which is infinitely worſe than all its troubles and calamities; loſe Gods favour, and our own innocence, and the rewards thereunto belonging, and ſuffer the inſupportable effects of his diſpleaſure in another life.

But if we ſtedfaſtly perſevere in the choice and practice of our duties through all the varieties of temptations, which aſſault us in this vain world: If we live by rule, and not by ſhift, by principle, and not by chance, and occaſion; then ſhall we preſerve our own Integ ity,

continue in Gods grace and favour, ſecure the peace of our own ſpirits, grow to an excellent habit of mind, in its ſtrength and ſteadineſs, and tranquility; and finally, after all our trials, and all the joys of triumph over them, enter into our Maſters joy, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the World.

The

The Thirteenth Sermon.

John 7. 17.

If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.

WE live in a very inquiſitive age, wherein it is very much diſputed what is the true Doctrine of Chriſt, and what are the moſt effectual means to find it out, and underſtand it: It is diſputed, what is the rule of Chriſtian Faith: It is diſputed, what is the way certainly to underſtand that rule; and amongſt ſome it is diſputed how we are ſure that rule is true, whatſoever we underſtand to be ſo. In the mean time, while it is diſputed what is truth, Piety is very much neglected, men do not heartily ſtudy truth in order to the practice of it, they do not ſeek it with true deſign to live in due obedience to it; and this indeed is one great cauſe,

why the diſputes concerning truth prove ſo endleſs, and ſucceſsleſs, for did men ſtudy the will of God with hearty and ſincere deſigns to practiſe it when they underſtand it, they would ſoon attain the knowledge and belief of what is neceſſary to be known, for ſo we learn from theſe words: *If any man will do his will.* In which words we may obſerve,

1. An Antecedent, *If any man will do his will.*

2. A Conſequent, *He ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* Both which parts I ſhall,

1. Explain, and,

2. Then ſpeak to the ſenſe of the whole in an obſervation from the Conſequence; and firſt of all for the Antecedent: *If any man will do his will.* We muſt conſider,

1. That the perſons that are deſigned in theſe words, are thoſe only to whom the Goſpel is propoſed, not thoſe to whom it is not propounded. I do not undertake to determine how far thoſe of the Heathen world may deſire to know or do God's will, nor how far God may, or may not expreſs any favour, or mercy to them; but this is

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all I undertake, that the declaration or promiſe of Chriſt concerns thoſe perſons, and thoſe only, to whom his Doctrine is propounded: for as for others, St. *Paul* himſelf gives us this account of them, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher.* From whence it appears, that there is no general promiſe made (and therefore none in theſe words of Chriſt) that men ſhould believe Chriſt's Doctrine, unleſs it ſhould be propounded to them.

2. To this I add in the ſecond place, that as this promiſe or declaration concerns no perſons but only them, to whom the Goſpel is propoſed: ſo doth it not concern any, but thoſe to whom it is propoſed truly, and upon true accounts; that is to ſay, with the proper arguments which our Saviour uſed to confirm his Doctrine; If his Doctrine be not truly propoſed, it is not really his Doctrine, but it is the opinion of the Preacher, and it is not any man's own Opinion, but it is the true Doctrine of Chriſt to which the promiſe of Chriſt belongs.

And then further, if the very true Doctrine of Chriſt be not propounded by

by true arguments, by thoſe arguments and demonſtrations, which Chriſt himſelf and his Apoſtles have afforded for the proof of the truth of it, it may poſſibly fail of gaining credit for want of true and proper evidence: if men ſhall labour to prove the Goſpel by arguments of their own invention, and not by miracles and predictions, not by the true and proper arguments, which were intended for its proof; the weakneſs of them that do propoſe it, may prejudice the truth which is propoſed, and that with thoſe very men themſelves, who were diſpoſed to entertain it.

2. now theſe are they, who are ready to do the will of God, when it appears to be his will; If any man, ſays Chriſt, will do his will, that is to ſay, whoſoever he be, that is ſo diſpoſed, ſo affected towards God, as that he is willing to do, or ſuffer whatſoever God ſhall require of him, when it appears that God requires it, whoſoever is upright and ſincere, not prejudiced by any inordinate luſt, by Pride, or Avarice or Senſuality, but willing to obey the Commands of God, this man will believe the Goſpel, when truly and ſufficently propounded to him, propounded as it is to us.

2. So

2. So it follows in the Conſequent: *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.*

1. In which Conſequent, the *Doctrine* was that which was taught by Chriſt, and that which he taught was his *Goſpel.*

2. And then whereas it is further added, that, *if any man will do the will of God, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether* our Lord *ſpake of himſelf*, or whether he ſpake of God, this is not ſo to be underſtood as if there were any doubt at all, whether he ſpake of God, or not; but as a peremptory affirmation, that what he ſpake, was the word of God; ſo that the ſenſe of the words is this: That whoſoever is ſo diſpoſed and inclined, as that he is willing to do *God's will*, will readily believe the Goſpel of Chriſt, when truly and ſufficiently propounded to him.

Theſe things explained, the obſervation the words offer us is this:

That a hearty and ſincere inclination to do whatſoever God commands, is a moſt powerful preparation to underſtand and believe the Goſpel; I do not ſay, that none but they who are thus prepared do ever believe, or underſtand it; for experience often ſhews the contrary;

trary; this it ſhews in all thoſe perſons, who believe it, and yet obey it not, and of theſe no doubt, there are great numbers; but this I ſay, that they who are really thus diſpoſed, are under a powerful preparation to believe the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as will appear from ſeveral Reaſons. For,

1. Firſt of all, whoſoever he be that is thus prepared, whoſe heart and will is ſincerely bent to do whatſoever God ſhall command him, the ſame perſon will not neglect the uſe of ſincere and true endeavours to inform himſelf, eſpecially in the Doctrine of Chriſt, which threatens no leſs than death eternal to them that refuſe and diſobey it; and promiſes everlaſting happineſs to all that believe it, and obey it.

Whoſoever is willing to do God's will, when he knows it, is willing to know and underſtand it, in order to the doing of it. The ſame probity, the ſame ſincerity of heart and will, which doth diſpoſe him to the one, diſpoſes him alſo to the other: He that will not endeavour to know *God's will*, will not obey it, though he know it; he that will obey it, when he knows it, will labour ſincerely to know it alſo; and certainly this is a fair ſtep to

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gain the belief and knowledge of it; we do not find in the whole Goſpel, that any one man refuſed the Goſpel, who duly conſidered what it was, and the Miracles done for the proof of it; *Nicodemus* conſidering theſe Miracles, concludes that Chriſt was ſent of God; *Rabbi*, ſaith he, *we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do theſe miracles except God be with him*, John 3. 2.

Lydia attending to the Goſpel readily believed and entertained it, *Acts* 16. 14. The *Bereans* who apply'd themſelves to conſider the Goſpel preach'd unto them, and compared it with the ancient Prophecies, readily believed and entertained it, *Acts* 17. 12. nor doth it appear that any perſon who did impartially apply himſelf to conſider it, and the proofs of it, did ever refuſe or diſbelieve it; which is no ſmall or obſcure evidence, that whoſoever uſes his beſt endeavours to underſtand the will of God, as every ſincere perſon doth, ſhall not fail to believe the Goſpel duly and rightly propounded to him.

2. Add hereunto in the ſecond place, that a true and hearty inclination to do whatſoever God commands, removes thoſe inward diſpoſitions of Pride, and Avarice,

Avarice and Senſuality, which are the cauſes of Infidelity. Truth hath no enemy but Vice. Men never disbelieve the Goſpel but upon ſome prejudice they have againſt it; nor are they prejudiced againſt the Goſpel, but by their luſts, which it forbids and threatens with moſt ſevere puniſhment. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil; for every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* Truth is rejected and disbelieved, becauſe diſguſted and diſreliſhed; it is diſreliſhed, becauſe it forbids, becauſe it reproves and controls thoſe luſts to which men have enthralled themſelves, which hold them in bondage, and captivity.

1. If we conſider the matters of practice which are commanded in the Goſpel, they are ſo ſuitable to our reaſon, they are ſo plainly good for the World, they do ſo evidently deſign our happineſs, they are every way ſo becoming God, that it can be nothing but the prejudice of mens unreaſonable luſts and paſſions, that can perſwade any man in the world, that the Laws preſcribed us in the Goſpel, are not the Laws

Laws of the living God, eſpecially ſince the firſt publication of theſe Laws were confirmed with many and great miracles: could any man living make a doubt whether it was the will of God, or not, that we ſhould love him with all our hearts, and do to men as we would that they ſhould do to us, were he not prejudiced by his luſts? Is it any thing elſe but want of willingneſs to do Gods will, that can raiſe a ſcruple in any mans mind, whether theſe things be his will or not?

And though the Goſpel in ſome caſes, that is, when truth is contradicted, require us rather to ſuffer for it, than to forſake or to deny it, yet ſeeing ſuffering in this caſe evidently tends to confirm the truth, to the glory of God, to the good of the World, and hath alſo the promiſe of life eternal: This very love of patient ſuffering in this caſe, cannot offend the minds of any, but thoſe that are prejudiced by their luſts, thoſe who will not do God's will, although ſufficiently propounded to them.

2. As for thoſe Articles of our faith, that do not contain matter of practice, ſince there is nothing of contradiction, nothing at all of abſurdneſs in them; ſince thoſe that declare matter of fact,

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as that our Lord lived, and dyed, and roſe again, and ſent the Spirit to his Apoſtles, are atteſted by univerſal conſent of thoſe that could not but know the truth, and had no reaſon to abuſe it; ſince all the reſt were clearly confirmed by evident and undeniable miracles, there is no cauſe we can imagine, why any man ſhould doubt or disbelieve them, ſave only prejudice againſt the Precepts, againſt the Laws of the ſame Goſpel, wherein theſe Doctrines are revealed; ſo that whoſoever is ſo diſpoſed, as that he is willing to do God's will, is under an effectual preparation to believe and entertain the Goſpel whenſoever duly propounded to him.

3. Add hereunto in the third place, that God hath promiſed his holy Spirit to aſſiſt the upright and ſincere, and that a willingneſs to do Gods will whenſoever we know and underſtand it, is the very nature of ſincerity. *Ask and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and you ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you, Luk.* 11. 9. and afterwards at the 13*th* verſe, *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy ſpirit to them that*

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'ask him. To whom is this promiſe of the Spirit made? if unto all that pray for it, much more to them that ſincerely ask it; to theſe at leaſt, or elſe to none; to theſe although to no other perſons. *The meek*, ſays *David*, *will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way*, Pſal. 25. 9. and more expreſly at the 14th verſe, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant*, them will he bleſs with his aſſiſtance, them will he guide by his Holy Spirit, them will he govern and direct; for as he ſometimes offers his grace to them that refuſe to entertain it, ſo he never denies it to them that do ſincerely deſire, and uſe it.

Now then to conclude the point in hand, being they that are willing to do Gods will, are willing to uſe the beſt endeavours to underſtand it, being they are free from thoſe prejudices, that hinder the underſtanding of it; being they have the promiſe of God to guide and aſſiſt them to this purpoſe: hence we conclude what we have obſerved, that a hearty and ſincere inclination to do *Gods will* is a moſt effectual preparation to underſtand and believe the Goſpel.

Now for the uſes of this point.

1. Hence you ſee, that God is not wanting to thoſe perſons who can reaſonably expect aſſiſtance from him, to thoſe that are willing to *do his will*, when it is duly diſcovered to them; whoſoever he is that is thus diſpoſed, may aſſure himſelf of Gods aſſiſtance to guide him into all needful truth, into all things neceſſary to ſalvation; whoſoever is not thus diſpoſed, cannot juſtly expect aſſiſtance from him; for why ſhould God make known his will, where it is certain before hand, that it will not be complyed withall? why ſhould he diſcover his will to them, who are reſolved to ſerve their luſts whatſoever the will of God ſhould be? nay to them, who will ſcarce believe any thing that contradicts their luſts and paſſions, though never ſo duly propounded to them; which is the caſe of every falſe inſincere perſon, who is reſolved to believe nothing, which doth not comply with his own corruptions? God hath not promiſed that they ſhall ſee, who ſuffer their luſts to ſhut their eyes, who are not willing to have the light, nor was there reaſon for ſuch a promiſe. This fully acquits Gods providence, that he hath taken ſufficient care ſo to recommend the Goſpel in all things needful

ful for Salvation, to give ſuch evidence of its truth, that whoſoever is diſpoſed to do whatſoever God commands (which the light of Nature it ſelf ſuggeſts) ſhall eaſily know and entertain whatſoever is neceſſary to Salvation; ſuch is the courſe that God hath taken in the revelation of the Goſpel, and of all things neceſſary to Salvation, that none will complain of want of evidence, but only thoſe that want integrity, thoſe who will not do Gods will, although they know and underſtand it. And for this they are to blame themſelves, and conſequently for the effects of it, their infidelity or misbelief.

2. But then ſecondly, ſeeing they that are willing to do Gods will, find the Goſpel ſo atteſted, as that they who will give credit to it, ſhall know and underſtand whatſoever is neceſſary to Salvation: hence we may gueſs at the great cauſe of infidelity and misbelief, whereſoever the Goſpel is revealed. The Goſpel forbids, the Goſpel threatens the ſinful luſts and lives of men, and therefore they who reſolve to continue in their ſins, cavil, and quarrel, and contradict it; they hate that Doctrine which reproves them, and will not believe what they hate, although it flaſh in

their very faces. Theſe men *ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not*, ſaith our Lord, and in them is fulfilled the Prophecie of *Iſaiah*, which ſaith, *by hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand, and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive*, Matt. 13. 14.

And as there are ſome who disbelieve the whole Goſpel meerly in favour of their luſts: ſo others upon the ſame account groſly miſtake and miſunderſtand it: They will admit no ſenſe of it, but what is conſiſtent with their ſins, what gives them leave to enjoy their luſts, and hope for pardon notwithſtanding.

Men who reſolve to retain their luſts, who will not part with their darling ſins upon any conditions whatſoever, muſt ſearch out eaſie ways to Heaven, find out other terms of Salvation than what the Goſpel hath propounded. Let the Goſpel be never ſo expreſs in the denunications of Gods diſpleaſure againſt thoſe ſins they live in, they muſt find out ſome arts and ſhifts to evade and eſcape the plaineſt truths by ſome reſerves, or falſe gloſſes, by clouding what is plain and evident. Let it be never ſo expreſly ſaid, and that by our bleſſed Lord himſelf, *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee,*

——*and*

——*and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for the, that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into Hell,* Matt. 5. 29, 30. Theſe men muſt find out ſome diſtinctions, whereby they may retain that eye, whereby they may reſerve that hand, ſecure their dearly beloved luſts, and yet eſcape the flames of Hell. It ſhall be anſwered to theſe and all other like expreſſions, either that this is legal Doctrine, and that Chriſt hath ſo fulfilled the Law, as that there is nothing for them to do, but to rely on his righteouſneſs, or elſe (as it is on another hand) that they will make ſatisfaction to God for thoſe ſins, which they will not forſake; they will confeſs them to the Prieſt, they will receive his abſolution, they will moſt duly perform the penance which is preſcribed them by the Prieſt, give ſo much Alms, ſay ſo many Prayers, paſs through a courſe of ſo many faſts. And when they have found out theſe ſhifts, then will they believe their ſins forgiven, although they wilfully ſtill retain them: they will believe that this is ſo, in ſpight of common ſenſe and reaſon, in ſpight of the very light of nature, in ſpight of the

holy Scripture it ſelf, and the plain deſign of Chriſtianity; they will have a Creed which ſhall allow them in their luſts, though clearly contrary to that Goſpel, which our Lord himſelf hath revealed to us. From whence obſerve, that no man can be ſecure of truth, who is no friend to real Piety; nor is he likely to underſtand the will of God, who is not willing to obey it.

3. Hence we underſtand, that the only ſafe and certain way to know the will of God aright, to know what true Religion is, and what is the way to life eternal, is ſuch a ſincere diſpoſition of mind, as renders us willing to obey whatſoever God preſcribes unto us. For ſo is the Goſpel propounded to us, that whoſoever is ſo diſpoſed, will readily believe and entertain it upon the evidence which attends it, ſeeing nothing obſcures, nothing eclipſes this evidence, but an averſation to the duties, which are commanded in the Goſpel.

There is no Doctrine, no Precept, no promiſe, or threat in the whole Goſpel, that contradicts the hopes or intereſts of any man that is really good. Tis no intereſt of good men, that there ſhould not be a day of judgment, that Chriſt

Chriſt ſhould not come to judge the World, that he ſhould not judge it by theſe Laws, which are preſcribed us in the Goſpel. 'Tis no intereſt of good men, that any thing ſhould not be commanded, which is commanded in the Goſpel; that every thing ſhould not be forbidden, which the ſame Goſpel doth forbid; on the other hand, it is moſt ſuitable not only to the judgment and reaſon, but to the inclinations of good men, that God ſhould command us to love himſelf with all our hearts, to love our Neighbours as our ſelves; that he ſhould command all the vertues that are commanded in the Goſpels, truth, juſtice, temperance, patience, meekneſs, humility, and the like; that he ſhould forbid what is forbidden, pride, and covetouſneſs, and animoſity, fornication, adultery, and exceſs; it is ſuitable to their reaſon and hopes, that he ſhould diſtribute rewards and puniſhments in another World, according to mens behaviour here; and whoſoever is thus prepared to underſtand and believe the Goſpel, will neither reject nor misbelieve it, nor any thing that is contained in it, which is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, eſpecially ſeeing that God hath promiſed to guide

and aſſiſt them with his Spirit, who are reſigned unto his will, and willing to do what he commands them.

Obſerve we then, the great ſecurity that good men have of being led into all truth, which is needful unto their Salvation: obſerve what is the ready way to be guided unto all ſuch truth, it is to be upright and ſincere, it is to be willing to do God's will, willing to do whatſoever it be, that God ſhall pleaſe to require of us. If you find this willingneſs in your ſelves, ſuffer not your ſelves to be over-born with their confidence who vainly boaſt of infallibility in the midſt of moſt pernicious errours, and in plain contradiction to the Scripture. Truth is plain to them that love it, to them that are willing to entertain it; but as for them, that are inſincere, that have no hearty love to it, the plaineſt things are obſcure to them, *ſhowers and ſnares are in the way of the froward*, Prov. 22. 5. which way ſoever they turn themſelves, *becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion that they ſhould believe a lie*, 2 Theſ. 2.

4. Now therefore let the conſideration of what I have ſaid upon this point per-

perſwade ſincerity towards God, perſwade to willingneſs, to obedience in every inſtance whatſoever.

Sincerity is that which doth diſpoſe us to know and believe all needful truth, ſincerity is that which God will bleſs with the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, ſincerity is that which he will reward, not only with his conduct here, but alſo with eternal happineſs and everlaſting life in the world to come.

The

The Fourteenth Sermon.

Malach. 1. 6.

If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?

The former part of the verſe is thus:

A ſon honoureth his Father, and a ſervant his Maſter. If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?

THERE are ſeveral relative names or titles given to God in the Holy Scriptures, amongſt which are theſe of *Father*, and *Maſter*: He is ſtyled our *Father*, becauſe we receive life from him: He is called our *Maſter*, becauſe he hath a juſt dominion over us. And becauſe he is ſuch a *Father* to us, as hath created us out of nothing, therefore are we entirely his; and becauſe we are entirely ſo, therefore is he ſuch a *Maſter*, as hath moſt abſolute and moſt Soveraign Dominion over us; upon which account he may, and doth require the higheſt *love* and *fear*, and the moſt

moſt ſincere obedience from us. The neglect whereof in the perſons, to whom the Prophet here applies himſelf, was the cauſe of this expoſtulation : *If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?*

I ſhall not inſiſt on theſe two duties we owe to God, that is to ſay, *honour*, and *fear*; apart and diſtinctly from one another: But rather obſerve, that ſuch an *honour* is due to God, as comprehends a *fear* in it, and ſuch a *fear*, as alſo contains an honour in it; from both which things put together, there reſults a filial awe, or *reverence*, which is compounded of love and fear, of love to God, as he is our *Father*, and then of fear, as he is our *Maſter*.

This *reverence* then is the duty ſuggeſted in the words before us, which I ſhall purſue in this method.

I ſhall ſhew,

1. The degrees of *reverence* which God requires.
2. The proper effects of it.
3. The contradictions to it.
4. To which I ſhall add ſome conſiderations to produce this reverence towards God, both in it ſelf, and in its effects, and to reſtrain us from all contradictions to it.

1. And

1. And for the firſt; The degrees of reverence which God requires can be no leſs, than the very greateſt, that the Soul of man is capable of: For whereas the reverence we owe to God conſiſts, as I ſaid, of love, and fear.

1. Both theſe are expreſly required by God in the very higheſt and greateſt meaſures: Such are the meaſures of love to God, commanded by our Lord himſelf, *Matt.* 22. 37. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind*; to which he adds, that we may ſee, how indiſpenſably that is required. *This is the firſt, and great commandment*: And ſuch are the meaſures of fear alſo which Chriſt commands towards God, *Luke* 12. 4, 5. *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell, yea I ſay unto you fear him*: Where both the motive which he propounds to excite and awake this fear in us, which is no leſs than the very danger of Hell it ſelf, and the reduplication of the command, *fear him* whom I ſhall mention to you, *yea I ſay unto you, fear him*; evidently ſhew that

that God requires the higheſt meaſures of fear from us.

2. Now God hath demanded the greateſt meaſures of filial reverence, of love, and fear.

1. In conformity to his infinite goodneſs, both in it ſelf, and towards us, and to the Soveraignty and Dominion which he hath over us, and all his Creatures, which is moſt abſolute, and entire. He is ſo good, as that he merits our higeſt love: He is ſo great, that he demands the higheſt fear: He is ſuch a *Father*, as that his admirable bounty to us, ought to inflame all within us with the greateſt love and affection to him: He is ſuch a *Maſter*, whoſe infinite greatneſs in himſelf, and abſolute Soveraignty over us, ought to create the greateſt fear.

2. Eſpecially ſeeing that lower meaſures of love and fear, than thoſe we have for any thing elſe, will not ſecure our duty to him.

For ſuppoſe we love any thing, or perſon in all the World more than we love God himſelf; then, when that thing, or that perſon comes in competition with him, the love we have for either of theſe will overcome our love to God, and cauſe the neglect, or the violation of

of our duty to him. And thus in truth it comes to paſs, that the pleaſures and intereſts, the delights and advantages of this World reſiſt, and baffle, and overcome mens obligations to God Almighty. They love theſe things more than they love God himſelf, and ſo that love commands their wills, rules their affections, governs their thoughts, forms their deſigns in contradiction to God's commands, and the great concernments of their Souls. They are in bondage to the world, to the wealth, and honour, and pleaſures of it, being enſlaved and overcome by their inordinate love to them, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage*, 2 Pet. 2. 19.

And then again on the other hand, ſuppoſe we fear any perſon, or thing more than God, and his diſpleaſures, and the ſevere effects thereof, it cannot be but that the greater fear muſt conquer and overcome the leſs; whenſoever there falls a conteſt between 'em, it will ſo infatuate and blind the man poſſeſs'd and over-aw'd by it, as to throw him into a greater danger, namely, that of future miſery, that he may at preſent eſcape a leſſer, that is, the loſs of wealth, or power, or reputation, any

ny pleaſures and ſatisfactions, the loſs whereof he more reſents, than that of the favour of God himſelf, and the rewards that he hath promiſed. And this is the reaſon, why our Lord, as you heard before, allows no fear of the very loſs of life it ſelf, in compare with the fear of Gods diſpleaſure, *Luk.* 12. 4, 5. This is the reaſon, why he allows no love neither to the neareſt relations, and concernments, which may not duly be ſtyled *hatred*; and is ſo ſtyled by him himſelf, in compariſon with that we owe to him, *Luke* 14. 26. namely, becauſe the greateſt love, and the greateſt fear, that is to ſay, the higheſt *reverence* is due to God.

A leſs *reverence* than this is, will not anſwer God's expreſs Command; leſs than this will not comport with his infinite goodneſs in it ſelf, with his admirable bounty towards us, or with his entire Dominion over us; leſs than this will not ſecure our duty to him.

2. Having thus diſpatched the firſt general, where I have ſhewed the degrees of *reverence* we owe to God; proceed we now unto the ſecond, namely, the proper effects of it. And this I the rather inſiſt upon, becauſe there are few,

few, but will at leaſt profeſs an awe, pretend a reverence to God Almighty. But how ſhall we know that this profeſſion is true, and real? no other way, but by a ſingular care and diligence to do whatſoever he commands, and avoid whatſoever he hath forbidden. So true is this, that the very pretence of love, or fear to God Almighty, without the ſtudy of obedience, is a demonſtration of irreverence, as being an evidence of Hypocriſie; and this a contempt of God himſelf, as ſuppoſing him capable to be deceived by meer profeſſion and pretence, or to be charm'd and pleas'd by flattery, where he knows there is nothing of ſincerity.

Fear it ſelf, where it is ſerious, being joyned as it is in every perſon, with a love and kindneſs to himſelf, cannot fail to command a care to ſerve and pleaſe the perſon feared. Fear carries danger in its eye, and danger lays a ſevere reſtraint upon every appetite and inclination that leads unto it; danger excites us to endeavour to ſecure and deliver our ſelves from it, when it is duly apprehended, inſomuch that the clear and firm belief, joyn'd with the ſerious conſideration of the miſeries threatned to diſobedience, cannot but check,

check, and reſtrain us from it. The ſerious belief of what's to come, cannot conſiſt with wilful ſin and diſobedience; for ſuch belief will either ſubdue and overcome the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of ſin, or elſe theſe pleaſures and ſatisfactions eclipſe and extinguiſh that belief: They cannot poſſibly dwell together, men cannot indulge themſelves in evil, while they enjoy no pleaſure in it; they can enjoy no pleaſure in it, while they ſo believe as to dread the puniſhment threatned to it: Their luſts will be ſo uneaſie to them, being under the awe of fear and dread, that they will be forced to caſt them off, for their own eaſe and ſatisfaction. And this is the reaſon why thoſe ages, wherein the Goſpel is clearlieſt taught and underſtood, produce the beſt, and the worſt men too; for where the Goſpel is propoſed in the ſimplicity and truth thereof, thoſe that believe and entertain it, are highly improved and bettered by it; but thoſe that reſolve not to reform upon any motives, any incitements whatſoever, are forced for their own eaſe and quiet, to abandon the very belief of it; and having rejected this belief, become expoſed to the greateſt evils without the reſtraint and

contradiction of any remorſes and regrets: They have loſt that very fear and dread, which, whereſoever it is retained, cannot but put a reſtraint and awe upon all thoſe ſinful inclinations, that lead to future death and miſery.

And now, if the very fear of God, where it is ſerious and conſiderate, that is to ſay, where it is the thing it pretends to be, carry ſo great a power in it, to command and preſs obedience to him; how much greater muſt that power grow, when love being added unto fear, turns it into a filial *reverence*, and puts another nature into it? Love freely offers what fear conſtrains: Love makes that eaſie and delightful, which was a burden unto fear; nay Love it ſelf conſtrains likewiſe, but without reluctancy and oppoſition, for it removes theſe very things, and this is the meaning of St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *The love of Chriſt*, ſaith he, *conſtrains us*; we cannot reſiſt its Soveraign Power, we cannot oppoſe its mighty influence, but freely ſurrender all within us, all our powers and inclinations into obedience to our Lord, *who dyed for us and roſe* again. And to refuſe him this obedience would be an eclipſe of our own joys,

joys, would be to reſiſt our own deſires, would be a violence to our ſelves, ſuch an other violence and contradiction, as it would be to our Lord himſelf. And this is the Reaſon why our Lord hath repreſented our Love to him as a certain Principle of Obedience, *John* 14. 23. *If a man love me he will keep my words.* He can no more love and offend, love and diſpleaſe me both together, than he can chuſe to vex himſelf, and willingly practiſe and embrace a contradiction to his will; and altho' my Precepts may engage him to take up his Croſs for my ſake, and his own Salvation, yet will not this be grievous to him, ſeeing the love I had for him moved me to do the ſame thing, yea infinitely greater for his ſake.

Now then to conclude this ſecond general, ſeeing that *reverence* to God Almighty carries both fear, and love in it, ſeeing love and fear cannot fail to produce obedience to him, hence I conclude, that this obedience is ſuch an effect of that *reverence*, as cannot be rent and divided from it.

3. Proceed we now to the third general, where I am to ſhew the contradictions to that *reverence*, and thoſe are not only thoſe very acts, which are u-

ſually ſtiled contempt, and ſcorn, and are in themſelves expreſly ſo; but all ſuch actions, and omiſſions, as evidently flow from groſs neglect, and want of *reverence* towards God, that is to ſay, all deliberate and wilful ſins. And this appears from the very words of God himſelf: *A ſon*, ſaith he, *honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter*; *If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Maſter, where is my fear? ſaith the Lord of Hoſt unto you, O Prieſts, that deſpiſe my name, and ye ſay, wherein have we deſpiſed thy name?* They wondred, it ſeems, and were much ſurpriſed, that they ſhould be charged with ſo high a crime, as that of deſpiſing the name of God, that is indeed, God himſelf; they were ſo ſecure, they were ſo confident, that they were not guilty of this crime, that they are willing to come to trial, they plead not guilty to the Indictment, they debate and expoſtulate with God himſelf, and demand the proof of the charge againſt them, *wherein have we deſpiſed thy name?* But what's the anſwer which God returns? how doth he juſtifie the charge againſt them? *ye offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, and yet ye ſay, wherein have we polluted thee?* Is there not

not a Law which forbids you to offer any unclean or polluted thing upon mine Altar? do ye not know that there is ſuch a Law? and do you not then deſpiſe my name, while you wilfully violate that Law, which you your ſelves know to be mine? Thus doth God make good his charge againſt theſe perſons, who wilfully ſinned againſt his Laws; and ſeeing the very ſame charge lies againſt every wilful ſinner, therefore is every wilful ſin a flat contradiction to that *reverence* which every man owes unto his Maker.

But now although it be true indeed, that every deliberate and wilful ſin be a contradiction to that *reverence*, which every man owes to the Lord of all; yet are there ſome particular kinds of wilful ſins that are more expreſly ſo, than others. Some there are, that carry the very contempt of God clearly written upon the brow, ſome there are, that carry the marks of irreverence to him in more expreſs and legible characters, although not all in the ſame degree.

1. The firſt and greateſt of theſe ſins, is the deriſion of all Religion, not only neglect, but explicite ſcorn even of the very worſhip of God in Prayers, and

Praiſes, and thankſgivings, as well as of all other parts and inſtances of the duties he hath required from us. A thing St *Peter* himſelf foretold, 2 *Ep.* 3. 3, 4. *Knowing this firſt that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, where is the promiſe of his coming?* Where he deſcribes ſuch perſons, as deny the coming of Chriſt to judgment, and then, in conſequence of this errour, ſcoff and deſpiſe all Religion: now what is Religion, but the homage we owe to our Soveraign Lord, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth? and what is it then to deſpiſe Religion, but to deſpiſe that homage? and what is that, but a deſpight to God himſelf? the thing is evident beyond denial, and ſo is another beſides that, which is, that it is not matter of wit to deride and to deſpiſe Religion; for if it be frenzy, it is not wit; and if it be not a real frenzy to deſpiſe the homage a man owes to God, and ſo to deſtroy and ruine himſelf, there is no frenzy in all the World.

2. But to proceed, another ſin that carries a ſignal mark upon it of great irreverence towards God, is drolling upon the holy Scriptures, irreverent uſe of the words and expreſſions there-

in

in uſed, the application of thoſe expreſſions to trivial purpoſes and occaſions, prophane alluſions made unto them, and to be ſhort, the uſing of any thing threin ſaid for mirth, and ſport, and entertainment. This is to play with Gods Oracles, this is to jeſt upon Gods word, and ſo a reproach to God himſelf, and viſibly betrays a very great irreverence to him. No man trifles, no man jeſts upon the words of a mortal man, turning them into ſport and laughter, but in deriſion and ſlight of him; no man doubts, but that he that ſcoffs and derides his words, brings a contempt upon his perſon, and expoſes him to the ſcorn of others. And ſo do they (ſo far at leaſt as they are able) expoſe the Majeſty of God himſelf, that abuſe the words of the Holy Scriptures to entertain themſelves, or others.

3. There is yet another ſin behind, which I could willingly have omitted, if I could have tolerably ſatisfied my ſelf, that it doth not carry a more than ordinary mark upon it of an irreverence towards God, though not ſo great as the two former; and that's habitual and conſtant ſwearing, and that without all provocation, in common and ordinary con-

verſation, juſt contrary to that Law of Chriſt, *Matt.* 5. 34. *I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all*, that is in ordinary communication, for ſo it follows, *v.* 37. *But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.* Cometh of evil? ſo doth every Overt act of ſin; every ſuch act flows from ſome ſinful luſt within: *for when luſt hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* But it ſhould ſeem, this ſin of ſwearing in cool blood, and that in ordinary converſation, proceeds from ſome extraordinary evil. And what that is will very eaſily be underſtood, if we conſider that this ſin hath no foundation in thoſe appetites that God hath planted in mans nature, either to preſerve himſelf, or to propagate, and to continue his kind, as all indulgence to the body, all kind of ſenſuality have; for this ſin of common ſwearing hath no foundation in hunger, or thirſt, or bodily pleaſure, or in the deſire of wealth or eaſe, nay I may add of power, and greatneſs. It is a ſin without a temptation from without, nor doth it ariſe from any of thoſe very inward appetites, that God hath planted in our natures: from whence it appears, that it hath its riſe from an unnatural kind

of

of vanity, join'd with a very high irreverence towards God, who hath given an expreſs Law againſt it, and that it is in its own nature a bold oſtentation of that irreverence; for it is a calling God to witneſs in every trivial and ſlight affair, where a man would not dare to call a Prince, or a ſerious perſon to give his teſtimony.

I do confeſs, that ſome perſons may have been habituated to this vice, before they well underſtood themſelves, or the nature of the vice it ſelf. But why do they uſe no care to leave it? why do they not ſtudy to reform it, when they do, or may underſtand better? What will he do in compliance either with God's command, or with his own eternal happineſs, who will not labour to quit a Vice, which is ſo expreſly forbid by Chriſt, and to which he hath no greater temptation, than he hath to prophane and idle ſwearing? How can he hope to overcome the luſts and vices of Senſuality, which are nothing elſe but the abuſe of natural deſires and inclinations, and are by them ſuggeſted to him, and often excited by ſtrong temptations from without? how can he hope to deny himſelf in point of wealth, and power, and honour, or to embrace death,

death, or bonds rather than forfeit his integrity (which is moſt neceſſary to be done) who will not forſake a groundleſs ſin, a ſin without any natural appetite to ſuggeſt, and without a temptation to excite it? A ſmall degree of fear and *reverence* to God Almighty would eaſily overcome this ſin; which is an evident demonſtration that it flows from great irreverence to him.

4. But to proceed to the laſt general; namely, the ſeveral conſiderations which may produce a ſingular *reverence* towards God, both in it ſelf, and its effects, and reſtrain us from all contradictions to it.

1. Let us firſt conſider the Spirit and quickneſs of the ſtyle wherein God demands our *fear* and *honour*, wherein he requires our *reverence* to him. *If I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?* which Language carries this ſenſe in it. Do not you your ſelves require a ſingular love and fear from your relations, namely, from your children and ſervants, under the name of the ſame relations, whereupon I require the like from you? and, what is more, generally receive what you require? *For a ſon*, ſaith he, *honoureth his Father, and a ſervant his Maſter.*

ſter. And had he not reaſon then to add, *If then I be a Father, where is mine honour, and if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?*

2. Now therefore ſecondly, let us conſider how great a guilt we muſt contract, if we ſhould deny that to God, to the Father of the whole Creation, and the Soveraign Maſter of all the World, which every Father, every Maſter demands from his Children, and his Servants, under the name of the ſame Relations, though the obligations thence ariſing be infinitely greater as they ſtand between God and men, than between men among themſelves. And yet notwithſtanding all this, what Father is there amongſt men, who will endure neglect and inſolence, and diſobedience in his Son? who will not reject, and diſinherit, and utterly caſt him off for it, if he do not repent, and humble himſelf, and return to the practice of his duty? Where is the Maſter, that patiently bears not only the neglect of ſervice, but wilful injury in his Servant? Where is the Maſter that bears this without the greateſt indignation againſt his ſervant for ſo doing? and that doth not judge his guilt ſo great, as to deſerve the ſevereſt puniſhment? And therefore judge what guilt it is which every man draws upon himſelf by

by a wilful irreverence and diſobedience to the great Father, and Lord of all.

3. And although it be very true indeed, that they, who bear the greateſt load of guilt upon them, may not at preſent find themſelves grieved and oppreſſed by the ſenſe of it; yet ought it ſeriouſly to be conſidered, that God can in a ſingle moment (ſuch is his Soveraignty over the very ſpirit of man) awake that guilt into fear and dread in the greateſt Spirits in the World, awake it by an inviſible dart, a ſecret arrow of his indignation ſhot immediately into the heart. And ſome ſuch things he did in *David*, as plainly appears from his own words, *Pſal.* 38. 1, 2. and following verſes, *O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure: for thine arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy hand preſſes me ſore. There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger, neither is there any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin.——I am troubled, and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* Thus was a Prince, and a man of War, who never feared the face of an Enemy, who had encountred, and ſlain a Giant in a ſingle combate; who had killed two of the fierceſt kinds of ſavage beaſts,

beaſts, a Lyon, and a Bear with a naked arm, 1 *Sam.* 17. 36. Thus was he daſh'd and broken all to pieces by the ſenſe of his guilt, and Gods diſpleaſure, awakened by the hand of God.

4. Which teaches us further to conſider, how grievous a burden guilt becomes, whenſoever a lively ſenſe thereof is moved and excited in the Soul. *The ſpirit of a man will bear his infirmity, but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. While the ſpirit within is clear, and vigorous, it will ſupport and ſuſtain the Soul under every outward loſs, or danger: but if the Spirit it ſelf be broken either by the calamities of the World, or by the ſenſe of its own guilt, what ſhall ſupport and ſuſtain it? But then it is here to be remembered, that although the calamities of this world may indeed break the ſpirits of men, yet that there is vaſt difference between the breaches made by them, and thoſe that are made by their own guilt. Theſe may ſeiſe upon the Soul, but they cannot ſeiſe upon the Conſcience; thoſe may enter the outmoſt trenches, but they cannot enter the Royal Fort: but guilt attaches and arreſts the Conſcience, makes a deſolation there, where our chiefeſt ſupport and

and comforts dwell; for it comes arm'd with Gods diſpleaſures, and theſe are ſharpned with ſuch a force, as nothing is able to reſiſt, the glorious Majeſty, the Almighty power, the ſpotleſs purity, the Soveraign dominion of God himſelf. And hence that obſervation of *David*, *Pſal.* 39. 11. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth*: where the original word that is rendered *beauty* ſignifies all that is *deſirable*, all that is *pleaſant* in any perſon; that is, not only noble ſtature, excellent ſhape, comely features, lively air, pure complexion, and the like; but gay humor, pleaſant wit, fine addreſs, mirth and briskneſs in entertainment, and whatſoever elſe it be, that may ſerve to render any one acceptable in common Society, and converſation. All which *beauty* preſently withers, fades, and dies, as *David* here expreſly tells us, under the ſenſe of Gods diſpleaſures, when he rebukes us for iniquity: *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth.*

What then remains, but that we reverence ſo great a God, who can ſtain the beauty, eclipſe the Glory of all fleſh

fleſh with a ſingle frown of his diſpleaſure? and that we expreſs that reverence in moſt ſincere obedience to him? Fear him, for he is your Soveraign Lord: fear him, for he is a mighty God. The Angels themſelves ſo love God, as that they fear and reverence his Majeſty. The Devils tremble under his diſpleaſure, and the greateſt perſons cannot bear it, no fleſh, no ſpirit can endure it: It waſtes the one, confounds the other, no creature is able to ſtand before it.

But after all, although the Majeſty of God Almighty have a moſt aſtoniſhing glory in it, yet is the dread and terrour of it allayed and mitigated by his goodneſs; and therefore as he demands our fear, ſo doth he alſo require our love. And hath he not reaſon ſo to do? or do we want moſt powerful motives to excite, and kindle our love to him? He hath given us life, and breath, and being: he daily gives us all the ſupplies, and ſupports of life. We eat the fruits of his kindneſs to us, we wear the livery of his bounty, we lie down, and riſe, we ſleep, and awake, *live, and move, and have our being* under the ſhelter of his providence. And proceed to higher things, he hath given

given his own Son for us. *And he that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Rom. 8. 32. unleſs we deny them to our ſelves, by refuſing the terms, whereupon he gives them; What hath God by his prohibition denyed to men none of the bleſſings of this life, none of the joys of that to come; he hath not forbidden us wealth, or power, or reputation, or peace, or pleaſure in this World; much leſs denyed us eternal happineſs in the other. There is but one thing in all the World, which he hath denyed us, and that is *ſin*: and this very thing he hath refuſed us, becauſe it is really hurtful to us. And although he hath not allowed us this, yet can he give us that very thing that very happineſs we ſeek in it (for this we ſeek in every thing) this he can give without our ſin, and what is more, will give to them that truly love him, whatſoever is really good for them. He can give Wealth without Covetouſneſs, he can give Power without Oppreſſion, he can give Honour without Ambition, and pleaſure of life without any ſtain, without any ſpot upon our innocence. He needs not our

our ſin to make us happy, no nor do we need it neither to this purpoſe. The trueſt happineſs in all the World is to love God, as our Lord commands, *with all the heart, and ſoul, and mind:* If we ſo love him, we ſhall enjoy him, and ſhall be eternally happy in him. Which he for the ſake of his only Son grant unto us.

Now to God the Father, &c.

The Fifteenth Sermon.

Matt. 5. 17.

Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

IF you view the following parts of the Chapter, you ſhall find our Lord preſcribing ſeveral rules of vertue, which were, at the leaſt in ſome inſtances, far more perfect and exact, than thoſe that were given in the Law of *Moſes*, or by the *Prophets* ſucceeding him; and all of them ſtricter than thoſe were, in the ſenſe received amongſt the Jews: which is the reaſon, why he oppoſes what he ſaid, to what *had been ſaid to them of old.*

Now becauſe this ſeeming oppoſition between his precepts, and thoſe of *Moſes*, and the Prophets, might create a ſuſpicion among the Jews, that he came to deſtroy the Law, and the Prophets, to contradict what they had ſaid,

ſaid, and to offer violence to their Laws, he removes the occaſion of that ſuſpicion,

1. By a caution in theſe words, *think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets.*

2. By an expreſs declaration of the contrary, *I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.*

The former I ſhall not inſiſt upon, becauſe whatſoever is contained in that, muſt be conſider'd in the latter; for the better underſtanding whereof, it will be requiſite to explain what is underſtood,

(1.) By the *Law and the Prophets.*

(2.) What by *deſtroying the Law, or the Prophets.*

(3.) And laſtly, what by *fulfilling them.*

(1.) And for the firſt, although it be very true indeed, that the Son of God did not in any wiſe contradict either any hiſtory, or prediction contained in the Books of the Old Teſtament, but contrariwiſe confirmed whatſoever is there related, and accompliſhed what was foretold of him; yet I conceive that the *Law* is taken, in this place, for the Laws delivered in the Books of *Moſes*, and the *Prophets*, for thoſe rules of

life which are contained in the other Books of the Old Teſtament, which were received amongſt the Jews: and my reaſon is, becauſe our Saviour in his following diſcourſe in this Chapter takes no notice of matter of Hiſtory or prediction, but only of matter of Law, and Precept.

(2.) And then further, as the *Law* and the *Prophets* ſignifie the precepts delivered in the Books of the Old Teſtament; ſo when our Lord aſſures his hearers, that he came not to deſtroy thoſe precepts, his meaning is, that he did not come to thwart or oppoſe, or contradict them, or any thing which God deſigned in them, for ſo is the word λύειν taken in ſeveral places of the Scripture.

(3.) And laſtly, when he further adds, that he came to *fulfil* thoſe precepts; his ſenſe neceſſarily muſt be this, that he came to advance and improve, or accompliſh whatſoever God intended in them.

Having now ſufficiently cleared the ſenſe of the words before us, I ſhall proceed to ſhew the truth of the ſeveral parts contained in them.

1. And firſt of all, of the *negative part, I am not come to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets.* 2. And

2. And ſecondly of that which is *affirmative*, *But I am come to fulfil them.* In my diſcourſe on both which parts, it will be convenient to conſider the ſeveral kinds of Laws or Precepts given to the Jews, *Moral*, *Ceremonial*, and *Judicial*, apart, or ſeverally by themſelves.

1. And to begin with the negative part, plain it is,

1, In the firſt place, That our Lord did no way contradict any moral precept of the Law, but left his followers under perpetual obligations to obey all precepts of that kind: *All things*, ſaith he, *whatſoever you would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets*, Matt. 7. 12. Where we find him confirming that general rule, which the Law and Prophets had delivered touching our duty towards our neighbours, and conſequently ſetling all particular acts of duty, which the moral Law required toward them, by the confirmation of that rule. The ſame is done as to our duties both to God, and man. *Matt.* 22. 37, 39. where he eſtabliſhes and approves the two great commands of the Law, *that we love God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and that*

we love our neighbour as our ſelves; whereunto he preſently adds theſe words, *on theſe two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Theſe were the things which the Law and Prophets aimed at in all their precepts and exhortations; and theſe hath Chriſt confirmed and ratified, but no way prejudiced by the Goſpel.

I ſay not now, how much more holy rules of life our Lord hath given in ſeveral caſes, than were given by the *Law*, or *Prophets*; of that I ſhall give an account anon: all that I now obſerve unto you, is that an addition of higher precepts of obedience was no deſtruction, or violation of thoſe that were not ſo high as they, but really an improvement of them; juſt as the growth of a child to a man is no deſtruction, but an improvement of the perſon; or as a greater degree of vertues includes, but doth not deſtroy the leſs: from whence I conclude, that although our Lord hath added perfecter rules of holineſs, than the Law or the Prophets had delivered; yet he did not deſtroy them by ſo doing, but further improved what they deſigned.

But the great difficulty doth not lie in reconciling our Saviour's words (*I came not*

not to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets) with what he did as to the *moral* part of the Law, but with what befel its other branches, namely the *ceremonial*, and *judicial*, both which parts fell to the ground after his coming into the World, and what he did and ſuffered in it; and yet in truth he did not *deſtroy* either of them in the ſenſe, wherein *deſtruction* is taken in theſe words: that is to ſay, he did not oppoſe, or contradict them, or otherwiſe behave himſelf toward them, than was ſuitable to the mind and will of the Law-giver.

2. He did not violate, much leſs oppoſe any precept of the ceremonial Law, but cauſed the Law it ſelf to ceaſe, not by any oppoſition to it, but by removing all occaſion of any further uſe of it: as the Laws of war are not violated, but ceaſe, and take no place in peace. He introduced that very thing, which the ceremonial Law deſigned; he introduced the life and ſubſtance of thoſe things, which were foreſhadowed in that Law: and ſo he made it ceaſe and vaniſh, not by oppoſing or contradicting, but by accompliſhing the end of it, as it will further appear to you, when I ſhall ſhew *how he fulfilled it.*

3. Nor laſtly did our Lord deſtroy, that is, violate or contradict the judicial part of *Moſes* his *Law*, namely, the Law of the Jewiſh State, for that Law fell of it ſelf in the fall of the Jewiſh Common-wealth; when the City of *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed, when the generality of the people were carried away into captivity, when the whole Government was diſſolved, and the Country became a Roman Province, there was an end of that Common-wealth, and ſo an end of thoſe Laws, whereby that Common-wealth was governed. For the Laws of the Jewiſh Common-wealth were not given, ſave only to the people of the Jews, nor were they deſigned to continue longer, than the Common-wealth it ſelf continued; ſo that when this was once diſſolved, thoſe alſo fell of their own accord, without any violation offered unto them by our Saviour: from all which ſeveral conſiderations it plainly appears, that he did not come to deſtroy, or oppoſe the *Law*, or the *Prophets*, or any precept contained in them, and that he did not behave himſelf to either of them, as one that came to oppoſe or thwart them. So careful was he to give no ſcandal, to create no real offence to the Jews, by contradicting

dicting in any precepts, *moral*, *ceremonial*, or *judicial*, which the *Law* or the *Prophets* had eſtabliſhed.

2. Having ſhewed the truth of the negative part of our Saviour's words, which is, that he came not into the World to deſtroy either the *Law*, or the *Prophets*; let us now proceed to give an account of the other part, wherein he affirms, that he came to *fulfil* them; that is, as I have before explained it, to improve, and accompliſh what they contained, and what was mainly deſigned in them. And here proceeding in that method which I have uſed in the former part,

1. I firſt obſerve that our bleſſed Lord fulfilled the moral part of the *Law*, by giving ſtricter rules of holineſs, than either *Moſes* or the *Prophets* had formerly given unto the Jews, according to the received ſenſe amongſt the beſt of their Interpreters, and, no doubt, in ſeveral caſes, ſtricter than *Moſes* himſelf deſign'd; and this is the ſenſe wherein St *Chryſoſtom* and *Tertullian*, and divers others of the ancient Chriſtians, affirm our Saviour to have *fulfilled* the moral Law, as well as by perſonal obedience to it. They teach that he filled up thoſe vacuities that *Moſes* had left in moral

ral duties (becauſe the Jews were not able to bear them) by adding higher rules of holineſs: for as he eſtabliſhed the New Covenant upon better promiſes, than thoſe the Old was built upon; ſo he gave ſublimer and higher precepts, than thoſe that were given in the Old. If the Law, and the Prophets forbad murder, murder committed by the hand, our Saviour ſtifled it in the heart; for he hath forbidden cauſeleſs anger: *I ſay unto you, whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a cauſe ſhall be in danger of the judgment*, Matt. 5. 22. If *Moſes* condemned adultery in the body, our Lord condemns the very impurity of the mind, and ſtyles it the *adultery of the heart*; *ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old, thou ſhalt not commit adultery, but I ſay unto you that whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*, v. 27, 28. If the Law of *Moſes* allowed divorce upon ſmall diſguſts and animoſities, our bleſſed Lord doth not allow it, ſave only in the caſe of Adultery, which is the peculiar and proper breach of matrimonial obligation, *v.* 32. of the ſame Chapter. If the Law allowed a retaliation of evil for evil, *an eye*

for

for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, our Lord hath forbidden us *to reſiſt evil*, v. 39. that is to ſay, to revenge it; for not to reſiſt the evil done us, is to give place to the wrath of our Enemy, and this is the ſame as not to avenge it; and ſo we learn from St *Paul*'s words, *Rom.* 12. 19. *Dearly beloved avenge not your ſelves; but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.*

If the Law and the Prophets forbad perjury, our Lord hath forbidden all ſwearing in our common and ordinary converſation; *let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.* v. 37.

If the Law allowed to hate an Enemy, that is to ſay, any perſon of the ſeven Nations, whom God had devoted to deſtruction, our bleſſed Lord hath commanded us to love our Enemies. *I ſay unto you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* v. 44. of the ſame Chapter. Thus hath he fulfilled the moral Law, by filling up ſeveral vacuities that *Moſes* was forced to leave in it, in condeſcenſion unto the Jews, and to the hardneſs of their hearts;

and

and by adding higher rules of holineſs, than the *Law* or the Prophets had delivered.

2. Now to proceed, in the ſecond place, to the *ceremonial* part of the *Law*: this did our Lord fulfil likewiſe, and that alſo two ſeveral ways.

1. By perſonal obedience to it, and all the rights therein enjoyned, whereunto he freely became ſubject. He was *circumciſed the eighth day*, according as that *Law* enjoyned; he was redeemed by a certain price, being a Son, and a Firſt-born; he obſerved the feaſts preſcribed in the *Law*, yea and that of the dedication alſo, although but of humane inſtitution, as appears in the hiſtory of the Goſpel; he did, and permitted to be done, in and upon his own Perſon, whatſoever it was that Law required: whence he is ſaid to *have been made of a woman, made under the Law*; that is to ſay, ſubject to all its Rites, and Ceremonies, *Gal.* 4. 4.

2. But ſecondly there is another way, wherein our Lord *fulfilled* the ritual part of the *Law*, which was by accompliſhing all thoſe things, and introduceing all thoſe graces, which were typically figured, and ſhadowed in it. That *had a ſhadow of good things to come*, and

and not the very Image of the things: that is to ſay, not the things themſelves, *Heb.* 10. 1. (and ſo is the word *effigies* taken by no worſe an Author than *Tully* himſelf, *nos ſolidam & expreſſam effigiem virtutis nullam tenemus*;) but Chriſt introduced the very things, which were foreſhadowed in that *Law*. His Prieſthood was antitype to that of *Aaron*; his Sacrifice to the Sacrifices of the Law; his entrance into heaven it ſelf, *to appear in the preſence of God for us*, to the High Prieſts entrance into the Holy of Holies on the ſolemn day of expiation; the expiation made by his Sacrifice to that which was made by thoſe of the Law; the ſpiritual purity of the Goſpel to the legal waſhings, and purification, and abſtinences from things then impure, the eternal reſt that he hath prepared *for the people of God* to the Jewiſh Sabbaths, and new Moons; all which things were only *ſhadows of things to come*: and ſo the Apoſtle himſelf aſſures us, *Col.* 2. 16, 17. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a ſhadow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt*: that is to ſay, Chriſt introduced the things themſelves, which were but ſhadowed

ed in the Law by typical figures, and ſimilitudes: which is likewiſe the meaning of theſe words, *John* 1. 17. *The Law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*; he brought in the very life and ſubſtance of what was but pictured in the Law: and thus he fulfilled the ritual part of *Moſes* his *Law*, as well as *perſonal obedience to it.*

3. Now for the judicial part of the *Law*, whereby the Jewiſh State was governed, I need not ſay, how our Lord *fulfilled* it by ſubmitting himſelf both to the *Roman* and *Jewiſh* Magiſtrate. He was contented to pay tribute, he ſuffered himſelf to be apprehended by the Officers ſent to this purpoſe, he ſuffered himſelf to be tried and ſentenced, and yielded himſelf to the Execution of the ſentence unjuſtly paſſed upon him; and though he could not own the guilt, yet did he quietly receive the puniſhment; *for he was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo opened he not his mouth*, Iſa. 53. 7.

But the way whereby he did more eſpecially *fulfil* the *judicial Law* of *Moſes*, was by introducing the *royal Law* of univerſal love, and kindneſs; which,

if

if obſerved, would more effectually attain the end of humane Laws, than all the wiſdom, force, or power, which can accompany and attend them.

The end of all political Laws is only the ſafety and the proſperity of the Common-wealth, that men may live in mutual peace, that every man may poſſeſs and enjoy his life, and eſtate, and reputation, and whatſoever belongs unto him, without the trouble of fraud, or violence from other perſons; all which ends would more ſucceſsfully be attained by the Law of univerſal love, peculiarly ſetled by our Lord, than by the wiſeſt of humane Laws, and the ſtricteſt execution of them; thoſe can but bind the outward man, they cannot change the hearts of men; thoſe can but tie the hands of violence, and muzzle the mouth of the wild beaſt; they cannot alter and mend his nature, nor make him further abſtain from injury, than the fear of puniſhment and revenge may put a reſtraint and awe upon him: whereas the mutual love and kindneſs, that Chriſt hath commanded amongſt men, and alſo recommended to us by the higheſt and moſt effectual motives, would not only reſtrain the outward actions of fraud, and injury, and oppreſſion,

oppreſſion, but kill the very luſt within, wither the very root of biterneſs, and render every man eaſie and helpful to his neighbour, inſtead of being injurious to him; and this is ſuggeſted by St *Paul*, *Rom.* 13. 8, 9, 10. *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. For this thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, thou ſhalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf: love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Love throughly accompliſhes all thoſe ends, which were indeed deſigned by the *Law*; whence it is ſaid, That the *Law is not made for a righteous man*, a man animated and inſpired by a living Law of love within, *but for the lawleſs and diſobedient*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. And thus hath our Lord fulfilled the *judicial Law* of *Moſes*, as well as the *moral* and *ceremonial*, by the moſt efficacious ways and methods of ſetling ſuch a *Law* within us, as would moſt effectually work and propagate the great deſign of the *Law of Moſes*, *which was added*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made.*

Having

Having thus cleared both the parts of the words before us, it now remains that we reflect upon what hath been ſaid, and draw ſome Obſervations from it.

Firſt, And firſt of all, ſince our Lord came not to *deſtroy*, but to *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*, hence we learn, That Chriſtianity, that the righteouſneſs and holineſs of the Goſpel was the thing that God had in his eye, the thing that he purpoſed and intended, and that lay at the bottom of his counſels, in the whole Moſaical Diſpenſation, as well in all the external Rites, as the other parts of *Moſes*'s Law.

God never had any delight or pleaſure in the fleſh or blood of Bulls and Goats, or any Sacrifices of the Law; he was never pleaſed with ritual waſhings or expiations, as things excellent in themſelves; nor did he inſtitute theſe Rites for any complacence he took in them, but *partly* as the Ancients obſerve, to typifie things that were to come, namely, the myſteries of the Goſpel; and *partly* to retain the Jews, accuſtomed to ſuch like Rites in *Egypt*, in the worſhip and ſervice of himſelf, the only true and living God; leſt being denied their former Rites in the worſhip of the true

God, they ſhould have uſed them unto *Idols*, and to have continued in that apoſtaſie, whereinto themſelves and the world were fallen at the delivery of the Law.

Had there been no ſuch Reaſons as theſe for the Rites enjoyned in *Moſes's Law*, they had never been inſtituted or commanded, nor had God any reſpect for them, any regard to the moſt zealous performance of them, when divided from the eſſential parts, the great Fundamentals of Religion, *judgment and mercy*, and *the love of God*.

Hence thoſe words of the Prophet *Jeremy*, chap. 6. 20. *To what purpoſe cometh there to me incenſe from Sheba? and the ſweet Cane from a far Country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your Sacrifices ſweet unto me.* And thoſe of *Iſaiah*, chap. 1. 11, 12. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, ſaith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beaſts, and I delight not in the blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats.* Add hereunto thoſe excellent words of the Prophet *Micha*, chap. 6. verſ. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewithal ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the high God? ſhall I come before him with burnt-offerings,*

offerings, with Calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil? ſhall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul? No, *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Theſe were the things which he accepted, nay theſe were the things which he deſigned in the very Ceremonies of the Law, and in all its ſymbolical Types and Figures. And theſe are the things which Chriſt our Lord came to propagate and promote in all he did and ſuffered for us. So conſtant hath God been to himſelf, and to the advancement of real goodneſs amongſt men in all the Ages of the World, before, and under, and after the Law. He ſtill deſigned the ſame thing, he had ſtill the ſame end in his eye, namely, that we ſhould *love him with all our hearts, and love our Neighbour as our ſelves*: on theſe, as our Saviour himſelf tells us, *hanged all the Law and the Prophets.* And the end for which our Lord himſelf came into the World was more effectually to promote what the Law of *Moſes* had deſigned;

and ſo the Apoſtle himſelf aſſures us, *Rom.* 8. 3, 4. *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

Secondly, What then remains in the laſt place, but that ſince our Lord came into the World, not to *deſtroy*, but to *fulfil* the *Law* and the *Prophets*, ſince he hath fulfilled them by introducing that Religion which God always had in his eye in all the Shadows of the Law, a Religion ſuitable unto reaſon, a Religion that perfects humane nature, a Religion free and diſentangled from the load of Moſaical Rites and Ceremonies, a Religion aiming at nothing more than hearty love to God and our Neighbour, and peace and happineſs both in this and the other world: what now remains, but that we freely embrace and practiſe a Relegion thus recommended to us, neither reproaching it by our luſts, by ſoul and ſenſual inclinations; nor yet abuſing and obſcuring it by vain and uſeleſs ſuperſtitions.

It is a reaſonable and manly ſervice that

that God is pleaſed to require from us, it is the cure of all our maladies, it is medicine unto all our diſtempers, it is health and ſoundneſs to all our powers. It is not ſacrifice and oblations, it is not *circumciſion* nor *uncircumciſion*, it is not what is hard and burthenſom, but what is uſeful and good for us, 'tis *righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* So that had we no other demonſtration of the infinite love of God to us, this were ſufficient proof of it, that he hath made our Religion our happineſs. For in *Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion; but a new creature*; that is the renovation of our minds by a ſincere faith and love. *And as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.*

The Sixteenth Sermon.

Pſalm 119. 59, 60.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies; I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.

THE *ways* of a man being in the language of holy Scripture, all thoſe actions and omiſſions, thoſe words and thoughts and inclinations which ought to be governed by Gods Laws, here ſtyled his *teſtimonies* and *commandments*; there is no doubt but that theſe are the things which *David* here ſtyles his *ways*. Nor need we queſtion what kind of thoughts he employed upon them: for the event it ſelf declares, that they were ſerious conſiderations how far they accorded or diſagreed with Gods Commands, together with quick and ſtrong reſolutions to amend what he found amiſs in them; wherein he diſcharged a great Duty, but ſuch as is very

ry much neglected, yea ſuch as even he himſelf, as theſe very words themſelves ſuggeſt, had for ſome time, at leaſt, omitted. Some men are afraid to make a review of their own lives, as being ſenſible in the general, that they cannot account even to themſelves for their irregularities and neglects. This is the reaſon why they dare not reflect upon themſelves, but decline the teſt of their own Conſciences, like men unwilling to come to Tryal in that Court, where Sentence is like to paſs againſt them.

Others involve and intangle themſelves in ſuch a continual throng of buſineſs, and are ſo perplexed and overwhelmed with the cares and concernments of this life, that they allow themſelves no time for recollection of themſelves, and examination of their lives.

And ſome there are who ſpend their days in nothing but pleaſures and diverſions, in conſtant entertainments of fancy, which ſo poſſeſs their imaginations, that they leave no room for ſerious thoughts of the very concernments of this life, much leſs of that which is to come. Thus it comes to paſs, that few reform their evil habits, namely, for want of recollection.

But did we call our ſelves to account, and make inquiſition into our ways; did we impartially reflect upon them, and allow our Conſciences to examine them, and judge by calm and ſober reaſon, excluding the briberies of our luſts, and the fallacies which they put upon us; theſe thoughts, by the Grace of God aſſiſting, might have the ſame ſucceſs on us, that thoſe of *David* had on him. And what that was, we underſtand from theſe words, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies; I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* In which words he repreſents theſe two things:

I. The effect which the thoughts of his ways had upon him, which was the reformation of them, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.*

II. The ſhortneſs of the time wherein they wrought this effect, as it is expreſſed in the following Verſe, *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

For the better improvement of which example in order to our own advantage, I ſhall follow the method of the words, and ſhew what it is that the thoughts of our ways may ſuggeſt to us as apt and proper, 1. To

1. To work the reformation of them; and,

2. To work it without delay.

1. And to the former of theſe Generals I refer the ſerious conſideration of the vaſt number of our ſins, with the many and great aggravations of them; the ſad effects which theſe ſins have had, or yet may have upon us; the vanity and emptineſs of all thoſe pleaſures or advantages, which we have yet found in them, or can reaſonably hope to find hereafter, to weigh againſt thoſe evil effects; and the ſolid happineſs of that ſtate whereupon we enter, when we caſt off and forſake our ſins, and *turn our feet to Gods teſtimonies.*

Theſe are the things which the thoughts of our ways may ſuggeſt to us in order to the reformation of them.

Firſt, The firſt whereof (that I may ſpeak diſtinctly on them) is the vaſt number of our ſins, with the many and great aggravations of them, which we can never underſtand, much leſs reform, without impartial examination.

Sometimes we forget thoſe very ſins which we have committed againſt knowledge. Tract of time, decay of memory, multitude of buſineſs or diverſion, wear

wear out the thoughts of thoſe very ſins which we our ſelves took notice of in former times, though now they be vaniſhed from our remembrance.

Sometimes we take no notice at all of our ſins and follies, while we actually engage in them. We think vainly, deſire inordinately, ſpeak raſhly, cenſure unjuſtly, act indecently in the eyes of men, and ſinfully in the eyes of God, not conſidering what we do while we thus entertain and employ our ſelves. And this, no doubt, was *David*'s reaſon, why he repreſents the ſins of men as paſſing the reach of their underſtandings, *Who can underſtand his errours? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*, Pſal. 19. 12.

And if we be often ſo far ſurprized, as not to obſerve the motions of our own minds, (which we may feel within our ſelves) nor what we ſpeak, what we act before the ears and eyes of others, we may eaſily judge we are much more faulty in our omiſſions and neglects, which are leſs ſenſible and obſerved both by our ſelves and other perſons. For ſinful actions cry aloud in the ſcandals they bring upon Religion, and ſenſible injuries to our Neighbour, while mere omiſſions are dumb and ſilent, and make no noiſe or ſtir in the World.

And

And yet there are ſome other things which we obſerve as little as our omiſſions, namely, the circumſtances and aggravations of our ſins; which are ſometimes wilful and deliberate, ſometimes againſt our former vows and reſolutions of reformation; ſometimes againſt ſevere corrections, or kind and fatherly caſtigations; ſometimes pernicious to other perſons, as well as hurtful to our ſelves; often habitual and long continued, and always againſt the mercies of God, *in whom we live, and move, and have our beings*, even while we continue to ſin againſt him. Which aggravations of our ſins make little impreſſion upon our minds, much leſs urge us to reformation, till we ſeriouſly recollect our ſelves, and impartially reflect upon our ways.

But did we ſo reflect upon them, did we conſider how oft we have wilfully done amiſs, and that both againſt God and men, and how much oftner done the like through ignorance, errour and infirmity, did we conſider our many neglects in the Duties immediately reſpecting God, while we have omitted, or ill performed them; adding hereto our great omiſſions towards our Neighbour, while

while we have neglected to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to ſupport the weak, to aſſiſt the injured and oppreſſed; might not theſe thoughts by the Grace of God ſo repreſent our ſins to us, as that we ſhould judge it moſt unreaſonable ſtill to perſiſt and proceed in them? Could we think it tolerable to add more evil to that heap, which is ſo vaſtly great already, and to encreaſe a heavy burthen by further accumulations to it?

Methinks the remembrance of that time which we have miſpent, to the great offence of Almighty God, to no true advantage to our ſelves, ſhould perſwade the redemption of time to come by a ſingular diligence in obedience. Sure I am, that this is the Argument St *Peter* uſes to this purpoſe, 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. The *time paſt of our lives may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.* It is enough, and far too much, to have ſpent a day, an hour, a minute, much more a conſiderable part of life in ſervice and ſlavery to our luſts. Nor ſhould we remember we have ſo done, but with ſad thoughts for having done it. Theſe thoughts

thoughts are ſo proper to the remembrance of ſuch miſcarriages, that God himſelf ſeems to repreſent them as the natural effects and iſſues of them. For thus he ſpeaks to the people of the Jews, *Ezek.* 36. 31. *Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings, that were not good; and ſhall loath your ſelves in your own ſight for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* So black and deformed is that ſhape, wherein men appear unto themſelves upon a review of their many ſins, that then they abhor their own image, much more the ſins that have deformed them. And this is the firſt of thoſe motives which the thoughts of their ways may ſuggeſt to men in order to the reformation of them; namely, the number of their ſins, with the many and great aggravations of them.

Secondly, The next to this is the ill effects which thoſe ſins have had, or yet may have upon them in the very concernments of this world, as well as of that which is to come. And for the demonſtration of the former, I might appeal to the crazy Bodies, the feeble Limbs, the decayed ſenſes of vicious perſons, occaſioned wholly by their vices; I might appeal to their broken fortunes,

pitiful

pitiful ſhifts, and mean devices, to gain the very ſupports of life: which are ſo evident in experience, that Chriſt himſelf repreſents the miſeries which ſin produces in mens ſouls, by thoſe wherewith it deſtroys their bodies, and their proſperities in this world. This he doth in the Parable of a younger Son, *Luke* 15. who having requeſted of his Father, that he *would give him the portion of goods that fell to him*; and being gratified in this requeſt, not *many days after gathers all he had together, and takes a journy into a far Country*, and *waſtes his ſubſtance in riotous living*: having done this, and a mighty Famine ariſing in the Land, he then began to be in want, and is preſently forced to *adjoin himſelf*, that is indeed, to ſell himſelf, *unto a Citizen of that Country*, who ſent him into the Fields to feed Swine, but, it ſhould ſeem, ſo ill provided, that when he would fain *have filled his belly with the very husks which the Swine did eat*, he found not enough of them to do it, and ſo was ready to periſh for hunger. Obſerve what a Train of ill effects his pride and vanity drew upon him; it made him riotous and luxurious, his luxury brought him into want, being in want he is conſtrained to ſell his liberty,

liberty, and part with himſelf to another perſon. Being thus inſlaved, he is thruſt into a baſe employment, and made not only a Keeper of Swine, but like to one of the Herd it ſelf, being forced to eat as they did, and yet ſtill ſo pinch'd and ſtraiten'd, that he found not enough to fill his Belly. A very true and lively Image of men abandoned to vice and folly, who by indulgence to their luſts loſe that very eaſe and liberty, that ſatisfaction and pleaſure of life, which they endeavour to find in it.

But to leave this Parable at the preſent, and to proceed a ſtep further, I muſt not omit to put you in mind of the many remorſes and regrets which always attend the firſt beginnings, if not the intire courſe and progreſs of Apoſtaſie from the ways of Vertue. For God hath been, and ſtill is ſo faithful to us, both in the frame of our own natures, and the ſuggeſtions of his ſpirit, that both theſe put many checks upon us in our firſt adventures upon evil: and although mens conſciences loſe their edge, and the ſpirit of God withdraw from them, after long continuance in their ſins; yet is their condition much the worſe for theſe effects,

fects, though leſs uneaſie at the preſent. For there is no man but thinks it better to be readily capable of a cure, although by the very ſharpeſt remedies, than to die of a ſtupid and dull diſeaſe. Beſides it muſt not be omitted that the eaſe that's gain'd by being delivered from the rebukes and reproofs of Conſcience, is far overballenced by a loſs, which cannot be divided from it, namely, the loſs of the joys of innocence, and of the ſenſe of Gods Favour, and hope of a bleſſed immortality: which howſoever undervalued, where they are not felt nor well conſidered, are ſtyled *unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

All this while I have ſaid nothing of that effect of a vicious life, which of all others is moſt dreadful, and moſt certain, if not prevented by repentance, that is to ſay, *eternal death*; nor ſhall I venture my mean abilities to repreſent ſo great a thing, but rather leave it to be conſidered in its deſcriptions in the Scriptures, and more particularly in that we read, *Mark* 8. 36, 37. *What ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

Now ſince the recollection of our ſelve

ſelves, and ſerious reflection upon our ways may firſt recal our ſins to remembrance, and then ſuggeſt that all the evils before mentioned have been the effects of ſin in others, and that we our ſelves have had the experience of ſome degrees of ſome of them; methinks the very ſame thoughts that put us in mind of all theſe things, ſhould powerfully move us to retire out of all the ways of ſin and vanity, and reduce us into the paths of wiſdom.

Sure I am, this is no more than what our Saviour himſelf declares touching the forementioned Prodigal; who having by a luxurious life reduced himſelf to the utmoſt miſery, at laſt returned unto himſelf, and, *when he was come unto himſelf*, brake out into theſe expreſſions, *Luk.* 15. 17, 18, 19. *How many hired ſervants of my Fathers have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger? I will ariſe and go to my Father, and will ſay unto him, Father I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon, make me as one of thy hired ſervants*: obſerve the condition of thoſe perſons, who ſurrender themſelves unto their luſts, and ſpend their days in vitious courſes. They are as men *be-*

ſides themſelves, bereft of their reaſon and underſtandings, ſo is this perſon repreſented. Obſerve further, that he no ſooner *came to himſelf*, as being now chaſtiſed and ſubdued by the miſeries, his ſins had brought upon him, but he reſolves to return again to his Fathers houſe, to confeſs his ſins, to implore pardon, to abaſe himſelf before his Father, and to ſubmit to the meaneſt offices, wherein he imployed his hired Servants. So much regret, and ingenuity, ſo much humility, and ſelf-abaſement, ſo much ſorrow for former ſins, ſuch effectual purpoſes of reformation for time to come, may the thoughts of our ways, by the grace of God, produce in us, in conſideration of the miſeries which attend a vitious courſe of life.

Thirdly, Eſpecially ſeeing the ſame thoughts may alſo mind us of the vanity and emptineſs of all thoſe pleaſures and enjoyments, in fond indulgence whereunto we expoſe our ſelves to the dangers and miſeries before mentioned, which is the third of thoſe particulars, which the thoughts of our ways may ſuggeſt to us.

And here I ſhall not take the advantage either of repeating thoſe miſeries, or of ſhewing the meanneſs of ſuch enjoyments

enjoyments (whether you call them profits, or pleaſures) which the generality of men attain, or can reaſonably hope to attain unto by all their wit, and power, and intereſt. I ſhall conſider no allays, wherewith the want of wealth and power, or bodily health, may daſh the pleaſures of this life; but I ſhall give them all the advantage that can be wiſhed, conſidering them nakedly in themſelves, and ſhewing that even thus conſidered they are yet utterly inſufficient to give ſatisfaction to our Souls.

And for the proof of this particular, I ſhall not entangle your underſtandings with ſubtle and curious ſpeculations, but I ſhall exhibite it in a plain inſtance made in the great and glorious *Solomon*, whoſe wiſdom and ſplendour were ſo great, that when our Saviour would give an account of his own wiſdom, he found no fitter a way to do it than to prefer it before *Solomon's*, *Matth.* 12. 42. And when he would livelily repreſent the glory of the Lilies of the Field, tells us that *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe*, Matth. 6. 29.

He was a Prince of infinite wealth, his Herds and Flocks were ſo numerous

that he offered *twenty thouſand Oxen, and an hundred and twenty thouſand Sheep*, and all theſe for Peace-offerings, beſide what he ſpent in Burnt offerings, at the dedication of the Temple, 1 *King.* 8. 63, 64.

The daily proviſion of his houſe were *ten fat Oxen* (namely ſuch as were fed in their Stalls) *and twenty Oxen out of the Paſtures, and an hundred Sheep, beſides Harts, and Roe-bucks, and Fallow Deer, and fatted Fowl*, 1 *Kings* 4. 23.

The yearly income of his own Traffick, over and above what was imported by the Merchants, was *ſix hundred threeſcore and ſix Talents of Gold*, 2 *Chron.* 9. 14. And as for Silver, he made it ſo plentiful in *Jeruſalem*, that it *was nothing accounted of*, ver. 20. of that Chapter, it was *but as Stones* in his days, as it follows in the 29th Verſe.

His magnificence was equal to his wealth; for his *Throne was of Ivory, covered with Gold*, and its Footſtool was of the ſame Metal, and ſo were *all his drinking Veſſels*, and *all the Veſſels of the houſe*, that ſtood *in the Foreſt of Lebanon*, and many of his very *Shields* and *Targets*, as you may ſee in the ſame Chapter, 2 *Chron.* 9.

His

His wiſdom I have already mentioned, *He ſpake three thouſand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thouſand and five. He ſpake of Trees from the Cedar-Tree that is in Lebanon, even to the Hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the Wall; he ſpake alſo of Beaſts, and of Fowl, and of creeping things, and of Fiſhes,* 1 *Kings* 4. 33. His œconomical skill was ſuch, that when the Arabian Queen beheld the ſtate and order of his Family, She was amazed and aſtoniſhed at it, and *had no ſpirit left in her,* 2 *Chron.* 9. 4. From whence it appears, he had skill enough ſo to apply and uſe his wealth, as to create the higheſt pleaſures that any thing in this World can afford, by extracting the fineſt ſpirit of it.

Nor had he only skill ſufficient ſo to do, but he wholly applyed himſelf to do it. *He ſought in his heart,* as himſelf tells us, *to apply himſelf unto wine (yet ſtill acquainting his heart with wiſdom)* Eccl. 2. 3. He made great works, as it there follows, he builded Houſes, planted Vineyards, made Gardens and Orchards, and planted Trees in them of all kinds of Fruits, and made Pools of Water to render them fruitful. He got him Men-Singers, and Women-Singers, and the delights of the Sons of men, as muſical

Inſtruments, and that of all ſorts, *Eccl.* 2. And that you may ſee how liberal he was to other inclinations, he had ſeven hundred Wives, Princeſſes, and beſide them three hundred Concubines, who were as Wives, excepting only that they were not ſolemnly eſpouſed and endowed. In ſhort, he denied himſelf no pleaſure that the World could poſſibly afford unto him: So he profeſſes of himſelf, *Eccleſ.* 2. 10. *Whatſoever mine eyes deſired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy.* Thus liberally did he indulge himſelf, and that in the very Flower of his Age, while he had youth and health, and ſtrength, to taſte and enjoy all the pleaſures that wealth and power could miniſter to him, and theſe attended with admirable skill to uſe and employ them to that purpoſe.

All this while he had nothing to interrupt his pleaſures, having perfect peace at home and abroad; no ſeditions amongſt his own Subjects, no wars with any Neighbouring Princes, no nor any thing of envy or animoſity, nothing but honour and admiration, and what might ſerve to encreaſe his pleaſures, *For all the Kings of the Earth ſought his preſence, to hear his wiſdom that God had put*

put in his heart; and they brought every man his Preſent, Veſſels of Silver, and Veſſels of Gold, and Rayment, Harneſs, and Spices, Horſes and Mules, at a rate year by year, 2 *Chron.* 9. 23, 24.

Now what an account of the joys and pleaſures of this World may we expect from a glorious King, flowing with wealth, abounding in honour, enjoying all the delights of the World, and that in the very flower of his time, and without any outward interruptions?

Would it not ſeem extreamly ſtrange, if he ſhould not find his Soul at eaſe, and in full content and ſatisfaction? Would it not ſeem much ſtranger ſtill, if he ſhould expreſs a diſſatisfaction and diſcontent in the midſt of all theſe ſecular pleaſures? Yet this very thing doth he expreſs upon a ſerious review of them, for ſo he concludes his own relation of what he had done and enjoyed in the World, *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on all the labours that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of ſpirit,* Eccleſ. 2. 11.

See here the account that the wiſe and great and glorious *Solomon* gives of the glory of this World, which he pro-

nounces to be no better than *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, and that upon long and great experience. And let the conſideration of this teach us the emptineſs and inſufficiency of all this world can afford to us. And this we could not fail to learn, did we often reflect upon our ſelves, and ſeriouſly meditate upon our ways, and conſider how little of ſatisfaction ariſes even from lawful pleaſures, and how much leſs from thoſe of ſin, which though they ſhould not be imbittered, yet cannot but be much abated by the very ſin from whence they flow.

Theſe thoughts would teach us to underſtand, That God hath formed and deſigned our ſouls for pleaſures quite of another nature, for ſpiritual and immortal joys. For certainly he that hath been ſo liberal as to provide a proportionable food for all the Creatures below them, for the Fowls of the Air, for the Beaſts of the Field, for all things creeping upon the Earth, and all things ſwimming in the Sea, hath not been ſo narrow to the ſouls of men, as not to provide ſuch joys for them as may give them plentiful ſatisfaction. Which leads me to the fourth Particular, which the thoughts of our ways may ſuggeſt to us

in

in order to our reformation of them; which is,

Fourthly, The happineſs of that ſtate we enter upon when we caſt off and forſake our ſins, and turn our *feet to God's teſtimonies.* Then are our Sins remitted to us, wilful Sins, as well as frailties; and ſinful actions againſt God's Laws, as well as omiſſions and neglects; and *bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered; bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not ſin*, Pſal. 32. 1, 2.

Then we become the Children of God, then we become the ſpecial concernment of his Providence, then are we adopted into his Family, and to a title to an *inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us: For if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17.

Then are we renewed in the Spirit of our minds, then born of God, and made Partakers of the Divine Nature, then do we paſs from darkneſs to light, from bondage to liberty, from death to life. Then are we made meet to be Partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. Then delivered by God from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated

lated into the Kingdom of his dear Son. Theſe, and ſuch like, are the expreſſions whereby the Scriptures deſcribe the repentance of a Sinner, and the happy change which it makes in him, a change ſo happy in it ſelf, and of ſuch concernment to him likewiſe, that it creates a joy in Heaven, and makes the Angels themſelves rejoice. *For*, ſaith our Lord, *there is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth*, Luke 15. 10. and before that, at the *7th v. There is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, that need no repentance*, no Habitual change of life.

Suppoſe we then, that recollection of our ſelves, and the conſideration of our ways bring all the things, I have now mention'd, into our thoughts (and they are really apt to do it) ſuppoſe them fixed upon our minds by the cooperation of Gods Spirit (which he will not deny to them that ask it) might it not reaſonably be expected, that theſe thoughts thus fixed upon us, ſhould touch our Conſciences, move our affections, and kindle good reſolutions in us, and provoke us to greater care and diligence in the future Government of our lives? If we did fully convince our

our ſelves of the infinite hazards and inconveniences, that attend a vitious courſe of life, of the vanity and emptineſs of all thoſe things, for the ſake whereof we expoſe our ſelves to all thoſe hazards, of the peace and happineſs of that State, whereunto we enter by true repentance, I perſwade my ſelf we could no more content our ſelves ſtill to continue in our ſins, than willingly chuſe our own miſery, which God hath made an impoſſible thing, and that out of very faithfulneſs to us. Nor could we anſwer it to our ſelves to deny our ſelves the great advantages, that attend the converſion of a ſinner, did we repreſent them to our ſelves in ſerious thoughts and meditations. Theſe thoughts aſſiſted by that grace, which ſuggeſts them to us, would move us to chuſe immortal happineſs, and the joys that attend the firm and ſtable hopes of it, rather than the very higheſt pleaſures, which the wildeſt and moſt extravagant minds can poſſibly fanſie to be in evil.

2. Having thus given a ſhort account of ſeveral things, which the thoughts of our ways may ſuggeſt to us in order to the reformation of them; which was the former of the two generals before propounded

propounded. I ſhall now proceed unto the ſecond, where I am to ſhew what the like thoughts may offer to us to perſwade us to do it without delay, as it appears they did in *David*, who having ſeriouſly thought on his ways, delayed not to keep God's Commandments.

Where in my way to more particular conſiderations, I cannot but note this in general, that Evil is a moſt indefenſible thing, no ſooner conſidered, and underſtood, but preſently rejected, and forſaken. *I thought on my ways*, ſays the Pſalmiſt here, and what then? *and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies, I made haſte and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* No ſooner did he conſider his ways, and make a diſcovery of his Sins, but he quickly retired and fled from them as from the brow of a dangerous precipice, where he durſt not ſtand a moment longer. Sin will not abide a ſerious thought, it will not endure an impartial trial: It is an impoſture, it is a cheat, it is a lie, and ſo is every temptation to it, confuted as ſoon as underſtood.

But the more particular meditations, which recommend a ſpeedy repentance, are the conſideration of God's deſign in all his patience towards ſinners; ſerious reflection

reflection upon the uncertainty of our lives, in this ſo corruptible and frail a State; and likewiſe due conſideration of the ſeveral difficulties, and inconveniences, that attend the delay of reformation.

1. Therefore let it be well conſidered, what is the end of God's Patience, and whence it is that he doth not purſue and follow our ſins with ſpeedy and deſtructive puniſhments, but give us time and opportunity to recollect, and reform our Lives. The reaſon of this is not that the high and lofty one takes no notice of things below, that he is indifferent to good and evil, and unconcern'd in the Sons of men, and in what they do and ſuffer in the World. It is not, as thoſe ſcoffers imagined, *who walking after their own Luſts*, cavilled the delays of God's Judgments, and mock'd that patience, whereby they lived, ſaying, as St. *Peter* hath obſerved, 2 *Ep. cap.* 3. *v.* 4. *Where is the Promiſe of his coming? for ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*; but as it follows, *v.* 9. *Becauſe God is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, yea even thoſe very perſons themſelves,

ſelves, that injure his patience, and long-ſuffering.

In the mean time, I cannot deny that there is ſome ſhadow of an objection againſt Gods providence in the World to them that meaſure him by themſelves, and judge of him by their own model. For that he ſhould readily pardon our frailties, and long forbear our wilful ſins; that he ſhould continue thoſe very mercies which men abuſe, and turn into weapons of unrighteouſneſs, feed the mouth that blaſphemes his name, ſupport the Arm that works iniquity, preſerve that very life and ſtrength, which is ſpent and waſted to his diſhonour, and patiently wait for a Sinners return, while the Sinner abuſes that very patience to an Encouragement to impenitence, is ſuch an example of long-ſuffering as is no where found but in God only.

But I conſider that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, that *one day*, as St. *Peter* affirms, *is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day*; that he hath appointed and fixed a day, wherein he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, and therefore firmly ſtill believe, that his patience to Sinners in the mean time deſigns their repentance

and

and reformation, and that his mercies in Jeſus Chriſt are ſo great, that he will pardon the hearty Penitent after the greateſt provocations.

And this is that which himſelf ſuggeſts *Iſai.* 55. 7, 8, 9. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And leſt we ſhould disbelieve this, as a thing improbable for God to do, becauſe unuſual amongſt men, he preſently adds in the following words: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord: for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* From whence I conclude, That it is not indifferency to good and evil, nor want of concernment for mankind, which cauſes God to delay puniſhment; but meerly his patience and long-ſuffering, waiting for the Sinners return to him.

And may not the conſideration of this, when deeply fixed upon the mind, ſo powerfully affect the hearts of Sinners, as to urge them to ſpeedy reformation? May it not produce a great indignation againſt themſelves, to remember

ber their many misbehaviours, and alſo their long continuance in them, under all the patience of God towards them? May not the thoughts of that patience (where there is any ingenuity left) provoke the hearts of Men to gratitude, and gratitude unto ſpeedy repentance? Could any man think it ſafe or reaſonable ſtill to treſpaſs againſt that patience, which he had already long abuſed, and to provoke that very goodneſs which he had forfeited long ago, did he ſeriouſly reflect upon theſe things?

I hope there are few ſo void of ſenſe of their own concernments, and of love and gratitude towards God, whom ſerious thoughts of their own evils under the patience of God towards them, would not move to ſpeedy reformation. Saint *Paul*, I am ſure, repreſents the contrary, as a deſpight to the mercies of God, and a dangerous cruelty to our ſelves, in that ſevere expoſtulation, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs and forbearance and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*: which is ſo clear a demonſtration

monſtration that the conſideration of God's patience, and of his ends and deſigns in it, ſhould perſwade to ſpeedy reformation, that it would be needleſs to add any more to this Argument.

Secondly, Proceed we therefore to the ſecond thing, which cannot eaſily eſcape our thoughts, while we reflect upon our ways, and the effects and iſſues of them, which is the uncertainty of our lives in this ſtate of frailty and mortality. Which is ſo clear and evident to us, both from what we feel within our ſelves, daily decays of Natural Strength, and from what we ſee in many others, ſhort Life and ſudden Death, that there is nothing in all the world, no not the denial of a God, nor the making of one of the Trunk of a Tree, reproached in Scripture as a greater folly than a preſumption of long life, and of eaſe, and joy and pleaſure in it.

Obſerve how this is repreſented in the Parable of a certain rich Man; who having had ſo plentiful and ſo large a Harveſt, that he had not where to beſtow his fruits, thus deliberates with himſelf, *Luke* 12. 17, 18, 19. Verſes, *What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my fruits? And he ſaid, This will I do, I will pull down my*

Barns, and build greater, and there will I beſtow all my fruits, and my goods. And I will ſay to my Soul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry. But what's the next thing he hears from God? *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* The ſharpneſs and bitterneſs of which rebuke, joined with the ſudden confutation of this Man's promiſes made to himſelf, repreſents the folly, ſin, and danger of the like preſumptions in other men.

Let us therefore while we conſider our ways, the number and nature of our ſins, with all their ſeveral aggravations, the ill effects that will attend them, unleſs prevented by repentance, the abſolute neceſſity of this Duty for the prevention of thoſe effects; let us, I ſay, together with theſe, conſider the frailty of our lives, and in the conſideration hereof, never defer a neceſſary Duty to a time uncertain, to a day we may never live to ſee; and that not only becauſe long life is a thing uncertain in it ſelf, but becauſe the expectation of it (eſpecially being generally uſed as an encouragement to delay repentance) may very juſtly provoke God to blaſt it with ſudden diſappointment.

God

God doth not only hate the delay of reformation, grounded on presumption of long life, as a neglect of duty to him, but reproaches the very folly of it, stiles him a fool who so presumed: which puts me in mind of that of *Solomon*, Eccles. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest.*

Thirdly, But now because many Men may purpose future amendment, although they neglect it at the present, and will believe that these purposes shall take effect, notwithstanding all that can be said to shew the uncertainty of this event, give me leave to add a third Particular, which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us; where I shall grant what Men presume, that is, that they will repent hereafter, and further yet, that all their sins shall be forgiven, and they intitled to life eternal upon repentance. But I must not grant what they imagine, that it is as well to retrieve a sin, by true repentance for it, as to prevent the sin it self, that it is no loss in the mean time to have delayed their reformation.

It is a loss of precious time spent to

the great dishonour of God, and no true advantage to the Sinner.

'Tis a loss of growth in Wisdom and Vertue, which might have improved to higher measures, if they had been earlier applied unto.

'Tis a loss of higher degrees of Glory, unless the time that hath been mispent be retrieved by a very singular diligence, and excellent improvement afterward.

'Tis the loss, perhaps, of the Souls of others, who may have been mis-led and prejudiced by the worse part of a Man's example, namely, by his sin and vanity, but not amended by the better, that is to say, his reformation. For no Man can ever assure himself that the example of his repentance shall be as effectual to reform, as that of his sin was to mis-lead and corrupt his Neighbour.

Besides all this, the delay of repentance and newness of life renders the Duty far more irksome, and fills it with greater pangs and sorrows, and makes a Man's birth a new life, like that of a Child overgrown in the Womb, infinitely grievous and full of trouble.

Moreover it gives very great occasion of such reflections, wherein a Man's guilt recoils upon him in bitter remorses and regrets, even after repentance and reformation. It

It gives advantage to the Devil, (and he is very apt to take it) to upbraid the Conſcience with ſharp remembrances of former ſins, although they be already pardoned.

It gives him advantage to raiſe many ſcruples, fears, and doubts, of the ſincerity of a man's repentance, and of the acceptance it finds with God.

And, to ſay no more, late repentance is apt to leave the ſouls of men under many weakneſſes and diſtempers, juſt like a recovery from an obſtinate, long diſeaſe of Body, which though it be a recovery indeed, yet generally leaves it ever after under many infirmities and decays.

All theſe things may the thoughts of our ways offer to us, and theſe ſuggeſtions plainly ſhew us, That to continue in ſin at preſent, with purpoſe to reform hereafter, is as if a man ſhould wound himſelf out of preſumption of a cure, or break a Limb with purpoſe to have it ſet again, or throw himſelf into a ſharp Feaver with reſolution to uſe the methods for a recovery afterwards.

Seeing then the prevention of further ſin by ſpeedy amendment of our lives, is by many degrees better for us, than to retract it by repentance, and that al-

though we were as certain we ſhould repent, and amend hereafter, as we are ſure we now deſign it; let the ſerious conſideration of this, and of all I have ſaid to the ſame purpoſe, diſſwade the delay of reformation.

And becauſe that frequent recollection is a thing ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to render the motives to repentance effectual upon our hearts and lives, let us often retire into our cloſets, and withdraw our ſelves from the noiſe and hurry both of buſineſs and diverſion, and then diligently apply our minds to the conſideration of our ways. Let us conſider what they have been in former times, as well as what they are at preſent; let us call to mind our many omiſſions and neglects, our many frailties and infirmities, as well as choſen and wilful ſins; let us remember how much we have ſuffered, or yet may poſſibly ſuffer by them for nothing of real ſatisfaction; let us weigh the differences of good and evil, and their different iſſues and effects; let us remember that all theſe things, and many other, call loudly upon us to amend what we find amiſs in our ſelves, and that the patience of God towards us, the uncertainty of our own lives, the great diſadvantage of de-

lay

lay in a work of such concernment to us, press us to do it without delay.

And the God of all Grace and Mercy so assist our thoughts and Meditations by the operation of his Spirit, that they may succeed to the reformation of our sins, to the improvement of our Vertues, and to our eternal Peace and happiness in the great day of the Lord Jesus;

To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all Glory, Honour and Praise, now and for evermore.

The Seventeenth Sermon.

1 John 3. 7.

Little children let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous.

THE Gospel had not been long preached unto the World, but there arose a sort of persons, who though they professed the name of Christ, yet lived quite contrary to his precepts. Such was the Sect of the *Nicolaitans*, who took occasion from certain words of *Nicolas* the Deacon (the sense whereof they did mistake) [see *Grot.* & *Hammond* ad Revel. 2. 6.] to indulge themselves in sensual lusts, and to live in filthiness and impurity; and hence it was, that this reflection is made upon them in the words of Christ to the Church of *Ephesus*. *This thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate*, Rev. 2. 6. Like unto these, were those that are mentioned by St. *Peter*, 2 *Ep.* 2. 18. *when they speak great*

great ſwelling words of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them that live in errour.

And by St. *Jude, verſe* 8. of his Epiſtle, *Likewiſe alſo theſe filthy dreamers defile the fleſh, deſpiſe dominion, and ſpeak evil of dignities*; and afterward at the 10th *v. what they know naturally, as brute beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.*

Theſe were the *Gnoſticks*, a Sect of Libertines who, as *Irenæus* tells us (lib. 1.) *did practiſe all forbidden things without any modeſty, ſhame or bluſhing*, as believing it lawful ſo to do, and thinking themſelves, nothing leſs acceptable unto God for ſo doing: which is the errour which our Apoſtle obliquely touches in theſe words, *Little children let no man deceive you, he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous even as he is righteous*: *Little children*, ſo he ſtiles thoſe perſons who were leſs knowing, or leſs ſtable in the true Doctrine of Chriſtianity; ſo he ſtiles them *cap.* 2. 13. although he ſeems in another place, namely, *cap.* 2. 1. to give that title to all Chriſtians; *Little children let no man deceive you*, that is to ſay, ſuffer not your ſelves to be deceived by them that tell you that you may be righteous in Gods account,

account, and grateful and acceptable to him, although you do not do righteousness, that is, although your lives and actions be not habitually just and holy: for as Christ himself was righteous in the eyes of God, because he was really so in himself; so those only that *do righteousness*, that yield sincere and true obedience to Christs Laws, pass with God for righteous persons.

These things explained, I shall observe these two things from the words before us.

1. That men may imagine themselves to be righteous persons in Gods eyes, to be in grace and favour with him, though they live impure and unrighteous lives; although they do not *do righteousness*, else this caution had been useless. So it had been, had it been a caution against an errour, that no man could have fallen into.

2. That this Imagination is a very great and dangerous errour; so do the words themselves suggest. *He that doth righteousness*, that is, he, and he only that *is righteous even as Christ is righteous*: not that any man can be so in the same degree with Christ himself, nor by his own desert and merit, gain the favour and grace of God, but that there

is

is no way to gain it without being really just and righteous, as Christ was perfectly and fully so.

First. I begin with the first, which is, that men imagine themselves to be righteous persons in Gods account, to be in grace and favour with him, though they live in habitual disobedience to the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel. In the prosecution of which point,

1. I shall first prove that this may be so.

2. And then secondly give some account of the rise or occasions of this errour.

3. And lastly reflect upon the whole, by way of inference or application.

And for the first, that there may be such an errour as this, which I have now mentioned to you, plainly appears from matter of fact; and matter of fact plainly appears,

1. From the open profession of some.

2. And secondly from the lives of others.

1. There are some, who openly profess that there is nothing required from us to recommend us to Gods favour, no condition on our parts to gain acceptance and grace with him.

They

They own no Covenant between God and us, but only one between God and Christ. This, say they, Christ hath performed, and so reconciled us unto God without the performance of any condition on our parts [See *Saltm. Flowings*, &c. p. 152.] wherein they palpably contradict the whole strain and tenour of the Gospel, all its commands, threats, and promises, as well as the vow made in Baptism, whereby we enter into a Covenant with God himself, and promise sincere obedience to him.

These are they, who are commonly styled the *Antinomians*; which was a Sect once very numerous in this Nation, but is now become either less numerous, or more silent; and therefore I shall not at this time make any longer stay upon them:

2. But to proceed to those, who though they do not in words profess, that men may be in favour with God, and duly hope for life eternal, though they live in habitual contradiction to the Laws and Precepts of Christianity, yet live as men who so believe, and consequently may be duly judged to cherish such a belief as this; and of these there are divers and several sorts.

1. Those who profess, or not deny the

the Christian faith, but have no care, no concernment for Religion in any instance of their lives, live as though there was no such thing, in all contradiction to its Laws. Such there were in St. *Paul's* days, as you may see, *Phil.* 3. 18. *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.* Yet these very persons professed themselves to be Christs Disciples, and to believe the Christian Faith.

As they did, so do many in our days: They profess to believe in Jesus Christ, they profess the hope of life eternal declared and promised in the Gospel; and yet they live in habitual and wilful disobedience to the holy precepts and institutions, which the same Gospel hath prescribed.

Now how can these things consist together? how can they possibly be reconciled, unless these persons judge themselves in Gods favour, though they live in such disobedience to him? could men neglect all the Laws, all the precepts of the Gospel? could they promise themselves the remission of sin, and eternal life,

life, while they continue in this neglect, did they not judge that they might gain remiſſion of ſin, and the favour of God, notwithſtanding the wickedneſs of their lives, or elſe at leaſt not judge the contrary?

They do profeſs, as I ſaid before, the hope of Salvation, Salvation promiſ'd in the Goſpel, they give no ſigns of doubt or fear of falling ſhort of ſo great a happineſs, they paſs their days in eaſe and pleaſure, they enjoy the world, they enjoy themſelves in the midſt of prophaneneſs and impiety; which ſhews they have, in their own thoughts, reconciled the hopes of future happineſs, with the preſent enjoyment of their ſins.

2. Another ſort there is, who though they ſeem to have ſome concernment for Religion, yet wholly neglect the practice of it: They ſpend their time either in ſpeculation of things remote from life and practice, or in meer diſpute about the things that relate to practice; in the mean time their own lives are little better than theirs who neglect all Religion. They are not more careful of truth, and juſtice, of mercy and charity in their lives, than other perſons; the ſame temptations that ſway the affections

ſections, and vitiate the lives of other men, do alſo ſway and vitiate theirs: they love the wealth, and power, and honour, all the pleaſures, all the advantages of the World, as much as they, who love them moſt; nor do they forbear to uſe any of the ſame methods, the ſame forbidden arts and ways to attain their ends, that are uſed by the common ſort of perſons.

They pleaſe themſelves in the ſpeculation of uſeleſs notions, or ſpend their zeal in meer diſputes, or the cenſure of the lives of others, but take no care to reform themſelves; yet all this while believe extremely well of themſelves: aſſure themſelves of Gods favour, and of his ſingular love to them, which ſhews they preſume upon his favour, though they continue in their ſins.

3. There are ſome other perſons who proceed indeed a ſtep further, but not ſo far as a Chriſtian life; who yet fully aſſure themſelves of being righteous in Gods account, and of eternal life and happineſs. Theſe are they who confeſs their ſins, and poſſibly with bitter lamentations, and with great accuſations of themſelves, (as in truth we have all reaſons to do) but when they have done, take no care to amend and reform

reform those very sins, which they confess with so much passion, and such invectives against themselves. Or if they proceed a little further, it is but to some ineffectual purposes, faint resolutions of reformation, which never come to effect or issue. They take the design for the thing it self, the resolution of reformation for the very repentance God requires. The former of these, namely, the resolution of reformation, they look upon as a clear evidence that they have the Grace of God in them, and therefore are in favour with him. But then the latter, namely, the breach of their resolutions, and the continuance in their sins, they look upon as a humane frailty, common to the Saints with other persons, common both to the good and evil. But whatsoever men may judge in favour of their own corruptions, I am obliged to put you in mind of that which I hope you know already, That it is not the meer intent and purpose of the reformation of wilful sins, of an habitual course in evil, but the true and real reformation of it, that recommends us to Gods favour. So St. *Paul* himself assures us, who having mentioned the several sins that are common in the lives of men, concludes his Discourse with these words,

words, *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of diſobedience*, Epheſ. 5. 6.

4. To make one ſtep further, Others there are who do indeed practiſe ſome real parts of Religion, but then wholly neglect others. They hear, they pray, they ſeem to be zealous in theſe things, and poſſibly in ſome others too; but yet ſtill live in ſuch ſins as are inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity, and the ſolid hopes of life eternal. They ſtill live, ſome in impurity and ſenſuality, others in injuſtice and iniquity, others in envy and ambition, others in pride, and ſcorn, and malice; ſo that no mans good name and reputation, no man's life how blameleſs and innocent ſoever, is ſafe from their unrighteous cenſures; yet all this while they are ſo far from thinking this to be any ſin, that they make a piece of Religion of it, and believe themſelves to be ſo much better, by how much they cenſure others.

5. Laſtly, There are ſome other perſons, who make a commutation with God in doing the things he hath not required, inſtead of thoſe which he hath commanded, They impoſe ſome penances upon themſelves, or practiſe thoſe

impoſed by others inſtead of repentance and reformation; they live by Laws of their own making, inſtead of thoſe which God hath made; or elſe they are moſt extremely diligent in the conſtant practice of one Duty, to make ſome recompence and ſatisfaction for the total omiſſion of another; their temperance ſhall excuſe their injuſtice, or their juſtice their ſenſuality; their zeal ſhall excuſe their animoſity, their very profeſſion of Religion ſhall excuſe the neglect of the practice of it; yet all this while they judge themſelves in the favor of God, and confidently hope for eternal happineſs. From all which inſtances it appears how apt men are to imagine themſelves to be righteous in the eyes of God, to be grateful and acceptable to him; although they live in wilful and habitual neglect of the Laws and Precepts of the Goſpel.

2. Having thus diſpatch'd the firſt general, proceed we now unto the ſecond, where I ſhall endeavour to give an account of the riſe and occaſion of this errour.

1. And firſt of all, there is no doubt but that the inordinate love of the World, and the ſinful gains and pleaſures of it, is an eminent and great cauſe why

why men abuſe and flatter themſelves with the vain hopes of God's favour, and of the ſalvation promiſed by him, although they live and die in their ſins.

This love it was, which did at firſt hinder the faith of Chriſtianity, obſtruct the belief and reception of it: and ſo our Saviour himſelf ſuggeſts, *John* 7. 17. *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* Where he inſinuates, that thoſe perſons who were willing to obey the Goſpel, provided they knew it to be of God; to live by the rules and precepts of it, would eaſily yield belief unto it, when it was duly propounded to them: and conſequently that the great reaſon why Men would not yield their belief to it, was becauſe they would not yield obedience to the Laws therein preſcribed unto them, becauſe they would not forſake thoſe luſts which the Goſpel commands us to forſake, *the luſts of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life.* And as it was theſe inordinate luſts, that hindered the progreſs of Chriſtian Faith, when it was firſt revealed and publiſhed; ſo did the very ſame luſts firſt bring corruption and deluſion into the Faith of thoſe perſons, that made

profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and ſtill continues to lead them into misbelief.

They will not part with their beloved luſts and pleaſures, they will not forget their ſinful gains, or what is eaſie, what is pleaſing to fleſh and blood: the foregoing theſe is by our Lord expreſſed, by *the plucking out of an eye, and by cutting off a right hand*, Matt. 5. 29, 30. whereby he declares the great unwillingneſs that is in men to deny their natural inclinations, though never ſo ſinful and inordinate. On the other hand, as they are unwilling to deny their natural inclinations, to forgo their inordinate luſts and appetites; ſo are they likewiſe very unwilling to deſpair of eternal happineſs under them, or of the favour of God to them, that's a black and ſtabbing thought, as the other is troubleſome and ungrateful.

Now what is the iſſue, what is the effect of theſe two things put together? the iſſue is this, Men preſently ſtudy to find out arts how to reconcile the hopes of happineſs with the enjoyment of their luſts; and alas! there needs no great art, for a Man to deceive and cheat himſelf, where he is willing to be deceived; he eaſily ſteps into this hope, that his ſins, though wilful and habitu-

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al, are nothing more than humane frailties, common to the good as well as evil; that God will never impute them to him; that he may firmly hope to be ſaved, though he never abandon and forſake them.

2. But then, ſecondly, that which gives ſomething of advautage to this errour in ſome perſons, is the comparing of the difficulty of ſubduing of their luſts, with the vaſt greatneſs of that loſs which they ſuffer, who loſe that glory, and immortality, which is promiſed to us in the Goſpel. They will not imagine that ſuch a loſs ſhould attend the neglect or non-performance of a thing ſo extremely hard and difficult; which errour, differing from the reſt, which I have before mentioned to you, ſeems to deſerve ſome more notice, than what I have taken of the reſt.

1. And firſt of all, thoſe who make uſe of this argument to promiſe themſelves eternal happineſs, although they continue in their ſins, ought to conſider that that happineſs, which God hath promiſed, being unſpeakably great and glorious, deſerves our labour, merits our ſtudy to attain it upon any terms whatſoever they be, howſoever difficult to fleſh and blood, and to our na-

tural inclinations. The greater it is, the greater the care, the greater diligence, the more of labour doth the attainment of it merit: and ſo our Saviour himſelf ſuggeſts, when he compares the Kingdom of Heaven to *a pearl of ſuch a price* and rate, as that the perſon who once ſaw it, *ſold all he had for the purchaſe of it* (Matt. 13. 46.) eſteeming nothing too dear or pretious to obtain a thing of infinite value, namely, the glory of God's Kingdom.

2. Again it ought to be conſidered, that although the ſubduing of our luſts, and oppoſing our ſinful inclinations, be troubleſome unto fleſh and blood; yet God hath promiſed his Grace and Spirit, promiſed a ſupernatural power to enable us to correct our Natures. Hence that profeſſion of St. *Paul*, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things thorough Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*; hence that exhortation alſo, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. *work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* From whence it appears, that God affords his aſſiſtance to us, to enable us to attain the end, and perform the duties, we cannot attain, cannot perform by the power of nature.

3. Add

3. Add hereunto, that being quickned, being aſſiſted by the operation of God's Spirit, that ſelf-denial and mortification, that temperance, holineſs, and humility, that reſignation to God's will, that mercy and charity unto men, (which was before hard and difficult) irkſome and troubleſome to our natures, is now made eaſie and pleaſant unto us; that Yoke of Chriſt which we before judged to be preſſing and uneaſie, is now made light, and eaſie to us; ſo that the Man, who found the duties, found the graces of the Goſpel contrary to his inclinations, now finds his affections and inclinations greatly reconciled unto them, and cannot now pleaſe himſelf in any evil, but finds it contrary to his nature, being altered by the Grace of God: and this is that which St. *John* ſuggeſts, 1 *Ep.* 3. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; but his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin becauſe he is born of God.* Theſe things conſidered, it is no wonder, that ſo great a loſs, as that of glory, and immortality, ſhould attend the wilful violation of the duties preſcribed in the Goſpel, though they be difficult to fleſh and blood. For though they be ſo, yet the reward promiſed to us is ſo great, that it de-

ſerves the undertaking of the greateſt difficulties to attain it, and God hath promiſed his Spirit to us, to aſſiſt and help us in thoſe difficulties; and the aſſiſtance of his Spirit makes our duties firſt poſſible, and afterwards eaſie to us.

3. The laſt occaſion which I ſhall mention, that ſome Men take to judge themſelves to be righteous perſons, to be in grace and favour with God, although they be Servants to corruption, is a falſe notion they have received of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

They fanſie that God looks upon them as having done what Chriſt did, and alſo ſuffered what he ſuffered; that is to ſay, both obeyed the Law, and made ſatisfaction for their ſins: which is a very great miſtake, repreſenting God as judging of things otherwiſe than they are in themſelves; as judging them to have done and ſuffered, what they have neither done nor ſuffered: which is to impute an errour to him. The true notion of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, is, that God is pleaſed, in conſideration of that righteouſneſs, to pardon the ſins, and accept the perſons, not of thoſe that do not believe, or not ſincerely obey the Goſpel; but of thoſe only, who do believe, and ſo obey

bey it. God never intended that Chriſt's righteouſneſs ſhould quit and deliver from our obligation to obedience, but that it ſhould oblige us to it: *For he bare our ſins in his own body upon the Tree, that we being dead unto ſin ſhould live unto righteouſneſs*, 1 Pet. 2. 24.

3. And now to reflect upon what I have ſaid to the laſt general before propounded.

1. Hence we learn, that the reaſon why the Goſpel of Chriſt hath no greater ſucceſs and efficacy in the reformation of the lives of thoſe that make profeſſion of it, is not any defect in it, but in thoſe that make profeſſion of it: it is not any defect in the Goſpel, but wilful miſtakes in the minds of men, that renders the Goſpel unſucceſsful in the reformation of their lives. The Goſpel gives no ground at all for any to think themſelves righteous, or hope for the pardon of their ſins, who are not true and faithful penitents, who do not forſake their vitious courſes. If men ſhould promiſe themſelves pardon, while they continue in their ſins, this is a promiſe of their own, it is no promiſe of the Goſpel. The Goſpel menaces death eternal to the impenitent and diſobedient, and if men ſhall

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ſtill believe the contrary, it is their errour, their wilful errour ſo to do; nor is it the Goſpel that deceives them, but they deceive, and abuſe themſelves.

2. Laſtly, ſeeing it is ſo eaſie, for men to impoſe upon themſelves, to judge themſelves in favour with God while they continue in their ſins, will very much concern us all duly to examine our ſelves, and make reflection upon our lives.

Firſt let us very well conſider, whether we do not indulge our ſelves in ſome ſin, yet flatter our ſelves with hopes of pardon, though we continue in ſuch indulgence thereunto, although we live and die in it. If we find our ſelves guilty of this, we labour under a great impoſture, an impoſture which, if not corrected, will rob us of our immortal Souls. It is hard for men of the trueſt principles to ſubdue their inordinate inclinations, to *enter in at that ſtrait gate* which leads unto eternal happineſs; but if the very principles of men, if the mind it ſelf be poſſeſſed with errour, and with an errour of this nature, which promiſes life eternal to them, while they indulge themſelves in evil; there is no hope, no expectation of reformation, till the errour it ſelf be quite removed. Now

Now therefore if thy life be vitious, if ſtained with any one ſin, which thou indulgeſt in thy ſelf, awake, and excite, and examine thy ſelf, and ſee what it is that gives encouragement to that indulgence: And if thou be ſerious with thy ſelf, and ſearch the bottom of thine heart, thou wilt find, it is one of theſe two things, either a preſumption of thy repentance and reformation ſome times hereafter, or a belief that thou mayeſt be ſaved, although thou continueſt in thy ſin without repentance, and amendment. The former of theſe is the greateſt folly, the greateſt imprudence in the world; the latter the moſt deſtructive errour: for certainly there is no ſuch folly, no ſuch imprudence in all the world, as to defer a neceſſary duty to a time uncertain, a time thou mayeſt never live to ſee; or if thou doſt, mayeſt uſe as ill as that which is already paſt, that which is now preſent with thee. And then to believe a ſin pardoned, while it is indulged, is ſuch an errour as doth not only open a gate to all ſin, but ſhut the door to all repentance and reformation. Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give a right underſtanding in all things.

THE

The Eighteenth Sermon.

1 John 3. 7.

Little children let no man deceive you, he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous even as he is righteous.

FROM theſe words I have obſerved theſe two things, 1. That men may imagine themſelves to be righteous in the eyes of God, to be in Grace and favour with him, although they do not do righteouſneſs, but live in habitual diſobedience to the Laws and Precepts of the Goſpel. 2. That this imagination is a very great and dangerous errour. The former I have already finiſhed, and ſhall now ſpeak unto the latter, that is to ſay, to the greatneſs and danger of the errour. Where I conſider, That for God to judge unrighteous perſons otherwiſe than in truth they are, to accept their perſons, and pardon ther

their ſins while they abide and perſiſt in them, is contrary,

1. To his own nature; and,

2. To the Goſpel likewiſe.

1. This is contrary to Gods nature, that is to ſay, both,

Firſt, To his wiſdom; and,

Secondly, To his holineſs.

Firſt, It is contrary to his wiſdom. So it is, to judge of men otherwiſe than they are in themſelves, to eſteem them righteous, juſt and holy, while they are unrighteous and impure. It is the nature of true wiſdom to judge all things according to truth; this is its nature as it is found even in men, much more as it is found in God. He cannot erre or be deceiv'd, even in the deepeſt, obſcureſt things, nothing is hidden from his eye, the night and the day, light and darkneſs are alike unto it; he tries the reins, and ſearches the very hearts of men, diſcerns whatſoever is in them, and judges according to truth.

Now he that judges according to truth, muſt judge of things juſt as they are; and therefore ſeeing the judgment of God is always true, hence it appears, They who are unjuſt and wicked, impure and unholy in themſelves, are ſo in the judgment of God likewiſe, ſo in his eſteem and account.

Secondly,

Secondly, If it be ſaid, That although it be very true indeed that God cannot judge otherwiſe of men than according to what they are in themſelves, not judge the Sinner to be righteous, the wicked to be pure and holy; yet that he may love and accept the wicked as much as if he were juſt and holy; the Anſwer is, That this is contrary to God's holineſs. This doth as much thwart the purity, contradict the holineſs of his nature, as the other contradicts his wiſdom, as is often declared in the holy Scriptures. *God is of purer eyes*, ſaith *Habbakkuk*, *than to behold*, that is to ſay, to approve *evil*. He cannot look upon iniquity, *Hab.* 1. 13. So far is he from approving evil, or thoſe that indulge themſelves in it, that *their way is an abomination to him*, Prov. 15. 9. From whence it follows, That they who judge themſelves or others to be in grace and favour with God, to be holy, juſt and righteous perſons, who are not fully and really ſo, aſcribe and impute that to God which is quite contrary to his nature.

If it be ſaid, That God is ſaid to *juſtifie the ungodly*, Rom. 4. 5. The meaning is, That he juſtifies thoſe that have been ſo, not thoſe that continue ſo to be;

be; that he juſtifies and accepts the ungodly when they forſake and leave their ſins, not while they ſtill continue in them. And ſo we learn from the ſame Apoſtle, who having given a large Catalogue of ſins and Sinners, concludes his Diſcourſe with theſe words, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *Such were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Firſt *waſhed* and *ſanctified* by Gods Spirit, and then *juſtified* and accepted.

2. But then ſecondly, as it is contrary to Gods nature to juſtifie and accept the wicked while they continue in their ſins; ſo is it likewiſe greatly contrary to the Goſpel:

Firſt, Expreſly, to the plaineſt and and cleareſt parts of it. And,

Secondly, To the whole by evident conſequence.

Firſt, It is moſt expreſly contrary to the plaineſt and cleareſt parts of it, to its moſt poſitive Declarations; ſuch as thoſe words of St *John* are, which I do now inſiſt upon, *Little Children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous.* He that is really and truly ſo, he is ſo, and he only in God's account. Like unto theſe are thoſe of

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St. *Paul*, *Epheſ.* 5. 6. where having mention'd uncleanneſs, covetouſneſs, and prophaneneſs; he preſently adds this admonition, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of diſobedience.* Whereunto we may add his Expoſtulations, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Can there be plainer words than theſe? or can there be any thing more contradictory to the Goſpel than what contradicts the plaineſt words and expreſſions of it? or a greater or more dangerous errour than what ſo contradicts the Goſpel?

The Goſpel declares that the unclean ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God, the Goſpel pronounces the Drunkard likewiſe, declares the covetous and extortioner, while they continue in theſe ſins, to be uncapable of that Kingdom; this it declares in as plain words as can be written or expreſſed, and will theſe perſons ſtill preſume of an intereſt in the favour of God, and of a title to his Kingdom? If they will, it is their folly

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ſo to do; it is a folly of that nature as doth not only expoſe them to the greateſt danger, but ſhut the door to all poſſibility of eſcape, while they perſiſt and continue in it. Such is the preſumption of God's favour, of being reconciled unto him, while a man continues in his ſins.

Secondly, And ſecondly, as this is expreſly contrary to the cleareſt paſſages in the Goſpel, ſo to the whole by evident conſequence: To its commands and exhortations, to all the promiſes and threatnings of it; and what is more, to the very deſign of Chriſt's death, the very thing which men abuſe into an indulgence to their ſins.

To promiſe our ſelves the favour of God and acceptance with him while we continue in our ſins, it is a preſumption expreſly contrary,

Firſt, to the Precepts of the Goſpel. Theſe require and ſtrictly charge us to *deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. 2. 12. Theſe require *that we put off concerning the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful luſts, that we be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, that we put on the new man, which after God is*

created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Epheſ. 4. 22. and following Verſes. In a word, the Laws of Chriſt require us to *love God with all our hearts, and to love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* Now is God ſerious in his Commands, or is he not? Is he in earneſt, or doth he only amuſe us with them? If he be not ſerious, if he be not in good earneſt with us in the Laws which he hath preſcribed unto us, where is his wiſdom? where his Majeſty? where the perfection of his nature? Doth infinite wiſdom trifle with us? doth he give us Laws without deſign that we ſhould obey them? or accept of us without obedience? If he be ſerious and in earneſt, then hath he given us his holy Laws with real purpoſe and deſign that we ſhould yield obedience to them; nor can he chuſe but be diſpleaſed, when we wilfully violate or neglect them; nor yet be reconciled unto us while he is ſo diſpleaſed with us, while we continue in diſobedience.

Now therefore for men to flatter themſelves with hope of the favour and grace of God, hope of the pardon of their ſins, while they continue in thoſe ſins, is nothing leſs by good conſequence than to imagine that God hath given us his

his holy Laws without intending they ſhould oblige us, that his wiſdom doth but trifle with us; which is an evident contradiction both to his Laws and wiſdom alſo. Thoſe are no Laws that do not oblige, nor is that wiſdom which is not ſerious.

Secondly, Add hereunto in the ſecond place, That a preſumption on Gods favour in men continuing in their ſins, is flatly contrary to all thoſe preſſing exhortations whereby we find our ſelves invited, nay vehemently preſſed, unto obedience in uumerous places of the Scriptures: ſuch as that, *Prov.* 1. 22, 23. *How long will ye ſimple ones love ſimplicity, and the ſcorner delight in ſcorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof.* Such is that *Ezek.* 18. 31, 32. *Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, and make you a new heart and a new ſpirit.* Such is that *Deut.* 5. 29. *O that there were ſuch an heart in them that they would fear me and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them.* Such is that uſed by St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes to them. Now then we are Ambaſſodors for Chriſt, as though God did*

beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſts ſtead be ye reconciled unto God.

Now what ſhall we ſay to theſe and many ſuch exhortations, wherein the Writers of the holy Scriptures, wherein God himſelf by them exhorts, invites, and mightily perſwades unto repentance and reformation, unto obedience to Gods Laws? Do not we ſee that they are moſt earneſt, moſt ſerious applications to us; and can we imagine he would apply himſelf unto us with ſo much vehemence of addreſs, ſo much ſtrength and importunity, if he could be pleaſed and ſatisfied with us; if he would pardon and accept us without reformation of wilful ſins, ſins we cheriſh and indulge? Is all this importunity uſed to preſs and perſwade a needleſs thing? a thing which is not abſolutely neceſſary to recommend us to God's favour, to obtain grace and acceptance with him? Let no man have ſuch thoughts of God, as to believe him ſo importunate in preſſing obedience to his Laws, had he not decreed to remit and pardon no man's ſins, and to accept of no man's perſon, who lives in diſobedience to them. The words, I have before cited, plainly ſhew he hath ſo decreed. For when he hath ſaid, *O that there*

there were ſuch an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them; He clearly ſpeaks his own Decree, namely, that it ſhall be well with no man who doth not fear him and keep his Precepts.

3. But then thirdly, What ſhall we ſay to the great promiſe of the Goſpel, namely, that of pardon of ſin, and life eternal? Is not this made to thoſe only that believe and ſincerely obey the Goſpel? is it made to the wicked and diſobedient? is it made to the cruel and unjuſt? is it made to the ſenſual and impure? is it made to any but thoſe only who ſtudy obedience to our Lord, and to the Laws by him preſcribed? Read and obſerve the whole Goſpel, turn it over leaf by leaf, from the beginning unto the end, and ſee if you find any one paſſage promiſing pardon and remiſſion, promiſing grace and favour with God to the impenitent and diſobedient: and is it not then a great preſumption for the impenitent and diſobedient to promiſe that to themſelves, which the Goſpel hath no where promiſed to them?

And yet again, what is the reaſon why God hath promiſed *eternal life to*

them who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and immortality, Rom. 2. 7. What is the reaſon why he hath promiſed remiſſion of ſins upon repentance, *Luke* 24. 47. but that the aſſured expectation of theſe ſo great rewards and mercies, might moſt effectually ſtir us up to the performance of our Duties? and that we may clearly underſtand that there is no ground to hope the one without performance of the other? Surely this is the reaſon of it; and yet it were no reaſon at all, if the Reward might be expected without the performance of the Duty.

Now therefore although we could imagine that God was not in earneſt with us in the Laws and Precepts of the Goſpel, nor in the preſſing exhortations which are annexed unto its Precepts (which yet would be an infinite folly;) yet the expreſs and clear promiſe of pardon of ſins, and life eternal upon faith and obedience to the Goſpel, evidently ſhews how real and ſerious God is with us, when he requires obedience from us. He would never have added ſo great a motive as the promiſe of glory and immortality to perſwade obedience to his Laws, had it not been his real deſign that we ſhould yield obedience to him,

him, or forfeit his grace and favour to us.

4. But to paſs on to the fourth Particular, there is nothing ſo flatly, ſo expreſly contradicted by a preſumption of Gods favour in men continuing in their ſins, as the threats and menaces of the Goſpel. For what is the thing theſe threats denounce? Nothing leſs than the wrath of God, nothing leſs than eternal miſery, as the ſure effect of that wrath; and who are the perſons upon whom that wrath and this miſery is denounced? are they not the impenitent and diſobedient? are they not thoſe who live in habitual diſobedience to the holy Precepts of the Goſpel? Hear the Apoſtle ſpeak in the Caſe, *Rom.* 2. 8, 9. *Unto them who are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.* And then that no diſobedient perſon may deceive himſelf, as judging himſelf exempt or quit from the common doom of the diſobedient, he further adds at the 11. verſe: *There is no reſpect of perſons with God.* He judges of all men as they are, nor doth admit of any excuſe of wilful ſin in any condition, or rank of men, more than in any other.

Now being God ſo plainly threatens death eternal unto the impenitent and diſobedient, can there be any ſo great an errour, as for theſe men to preſume of pardon, and to expect eternal life, while they continue ſo to be? The Goſpel denounces death upon them, they promiſe life unto themſelves: and is not then this promiſe of theirs expreſly contrary to the Goſpel? The Goſpel tells them that they muſt die, they ſay no, but we ſhall live, and do they not contradict the Goſpel? The Goſpel ſaith, that they are under Gods diſpleaſure, but they preſume they are in his favour; and where do you think lies the truth? in the Goſpel, or in their preſumptions? We muſt believe what the Goſpel ſaith, whatſoever it be that they preſume: and ſo the Apoſtle himſelf believed when he put this truth upon record, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. *We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; for what doth he add to theſe words? *Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord we perſwade men*; we labour to inſtruct the ignorant, we labour to convince the obſtinate, we labour to awake the drowſy, we ſtrive to ſtir up every

every perſon to eſcape from the wrath which is to come, by timely repentance and reformation: we *know the terrour of the Lord*, we do not gueſs, but we are aſſured, that it will overtake the impenitent, when he ſhall return to judge the World; and therefore uſe our utmoſt power to perſwade repentance and reformation.

5. And now becauſe that impenitent perſons, even thoſe that abide in wilful ſin, are wont to ground their hopes of pardon, and life eternal on the death of Chriſt, and the ſatisfaction made by him; it will be fit in the laſt place to ſhew that his death and ſatisfaction is ſo far from giving any countenance to this errour, that it doth utterly overthrow it: nor need we any further argument to convince and perſwade us that this is ſo, than that the death of our bleſſed Lord is always uſed in the holy Scripture as a mighty motive to obedience. For certainly that very ſame thing can be no motive unto obedience, that gives any juſt and true encouragement for a Man to continue in his ſins; yet ſo it is, the death of Chriſt is always repreſented in Scripture, as a mighty motive to obedience, unto all obedience to the Goſpel, and ſo deſigned by Chriſt himſelf. *He*

gave

gave himself for us, says the Apostle, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. *He bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. *He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World*, that is, from the lusts and corruptions of it, *Gal.* 1. 4. He gave himself for his *Church*, or Body, *that he might sanctifie and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present to himself a glorious Church not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Eph. 5. 25. *&c.* And that you may see that he was really understood to design this in his dying for us, and that his Death tends effectually to this purpose with them that understand it aright, hear what the Apostle himself speaks upon this point, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* From whence observe, that the death of Christ was so apprehended and understood

ſtood by the primitive followers of our Lord, that they took their very greateſt motives, their ſtrongeſt arguments to obedience from it: ſo far was it from giving them any grounds, or reaſons to cheriſh and indulge their ſins. If any Man ask what then hath the death of Chriſt done for the remiſſion of our ſins? My anſwer is, that the ſatisfaction thereby made, hath gained the pardon of all thoſe ſins we repent of, not of thoſe whereof we do not repent. It operates to the remiſſion of Sin, of all degrees and kinds of Sin, when we abandon and forſake them; not while we cheriſh and indulge them: and thus it becomes, not an encouragement to live in them, but to abandon and caſt them off.

3. Having thus ſhewed, that for God to accept men in their ſins, to pardon them while they live in them, is flatly contrary to his nature, contrary to his own decree declared and publiſhed in the Goſpel, I may now very juſtly conclude the thing, which I propounded at the firſt, that a preſumption of his pardon, while a man continues in his ſins, is a very great and dangerous errour: for ſo of neceſſity muſt that be, which is ſo manifeſt a miſtake both of the nature

and

and will of God, and that in a matter of no leſs moment, than that of eternal life and happineſs.

Add hereunto, that this is an errour, which makes Men ſtupid and ſecure in the midſt of the very greateſt dangers, lulls them aſleep under Gods diſpleaſures, charms them with the hope of Peace, while it is far removed from them. They ſpeak Peace unto themſelves, the Goſpel ſpeaks quite contrary; they judge themſelves in God's favour, the Goſpel pronounces that they are not ſo; they promiſe themſelves remiſſion of ſins, eternal happineſs and ſalvation, the Goſpel threatens death and judgment. In the mean time having reconciled the hopes of Heaven to the fruition of their luſts, they enjoy themſelves, they enjoy their ſins without any fear of danger from them; for ſuch is the nature of this error, that it infatuates the mind it ſelf, removes the force and power of Conſcience, lets the corruptions of Nature looſe, leaves no reſtraint, leaves no check at all upon them; and ſo expoſes them to deſtruction, till it be diſcovered and removed.

3. I have ſaid enough of the propoſitions which are implyed in the words before us, namely, (1.) that Men may preſume of God's favour while they continue

tinue in their ſins: (2.) That this preſumption of theirs is a very great and dangerous errour; and ſhall now conclude with what is expreſſed: *He that doth righteouſneſs is righteous*; that is to ſay, he that is hearty and ſincere in the practice of all the ſeveral duties preſcribed unto us in the Goſpel, he is acceptable unto God, he is in grace and favour with him; nor will God charge him with the guilt of ſuch lapſes and inadvertencies as flow from the frailty of humane nature. And what is the uſe we ſhould make of this? It is to awake and excite our ſelves to all diligence, to all ſincerity in our duties. And what are the motives, what the arguments to that diligence?

1. That which is mentioned in the Text, where we find, that this is the very thing that recommends us to God's acceptance; *He that doth righteouſneſs is righteous*, that is, he is ſo in God's account, as well as really ſo in himſelf: *for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry*, Pſal. 34. 15. They are as the apple of his eye, he hath a tender kindneſs for them, he bears a ſingular regard unto them, and takes an eſpecial care of them. Righteouſneſs is the Image

of

of God, true goodneſs whereſoever it is, is a beam derived from the fountain of light, which God doth always love and cheriſh, always bleſs with eſpecial favour; whatever regard or diſregard, whatever favour or disfavour it finds with Men, it never wants the favour of God; it is a participation of his Image, and he loves it whereſoever it is, as he loved it in his only Son: ſo the Apoſtle himſelf adds, *He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous even as he is righteous.* And is not this a ſingular motive to live in the conſtant practice of it? what is that that ſupports the minds, what is that that chears the hearts and ſpirits of wiſe, and good, and holy men under all the troubles, all the calamities of the World, but the hope and ſenſe of God's favour? where can we find a ſure refuge, an aſſured ſhelter, and ſecurity under thouſands of fears and diſappointments that attend us in the preſent World, but under the ſhadow of God's wings, the grace and favour of God Almighty? which Grace is Almighty like himſelf, and will preſerve to life eternal, if we labour faithfully to retain it by true and diligent obedience to him: Let this therefore move us to obedience.

2. And

2. And laſtly, becauſe we have taken upon us the name and profeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, and becauſe that Chriſt hath ſtrictly commanded *that every one that names his name, depart from iniquity*, leſt he bring a ſcandal on that profeſſion; Let the honour of ſo dear a Maſter, the credit and ſervice of his Church, which he hath purchaſed with his blood, perſwade the obedience of the Goſpel. If theſe, with other conſiderations tending unto the ſame purpoſe, have not this effect upon us, we ſhall bring a ſcandal upon the Goſpel, we ſhall open the mouth of ſcorn and clamour againſt the Religion we profeſs, we ſhall give occaſion for men to think, that we are under the great deluſion, which the Apoſtle here corrects, of thinking our ſelves righteous perſons, although we do not do righteouſneſs. But in the diligent and careful practice of the holy Laws that Chriſt hath given us, we ſhall honour our Lord, adorn his Religion, edifie others, edifie our ſelves, grow to an excellent habit of mind. What ſhall I ſay more? In ſo doing we ſhall obtain all the bleſſings of the Goſpel, and at laſt arrive at eternal happineſs.

THE

The Nineteenth Sermon.

Luk. 16. 8.

For the Children of this World are in their generation wiſer than the Children of light.

THESE words are a ſhort reflection made upon the behaviour of a certain Steward (as it is repreſented in a Parable) who, having imbezel'd his Maſter's goods, is called to account for his miſcarriage, and thereupon to be diſplaced. *How is it*, ſaith his Lord to him, *that I hear this of thee! give an account of thy Stewardſhip, for thou mayſt be no longer Steward*, v. 2. of this Chapter. The ſteward, ſurprized with the ſudden notice of his removal from his place, preſently begins to bethink himſelf, how he ſhall now provide for himſelf. *He ſaid with himſelf*, v. 3. *what ſhall I do? for my Lord taketh away from me the Stewarſhip: I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed.* But long it was not

not before he comes to a reſolution, which was, to gratifie his Maſters debtors in the abatement of their debts, that ſo when his Maſter had removed him, they might receive and entertain him: ſo it follows, *v.* 4. *I am reſolved what to do, that when I am put out of the Stewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes*: Accordingly calling them to reckon with him, he makes ſome abatement to every debtor of what was owing to his Lord: To him that owed him *an hundred meaſures of Oyl*, he makes abatement of one half: ſaying unto him, *take thy bill and ſit down quickly, and write fifty*, v. 6. To him that owed an hundred meaſures of wheat, he abated a fifth part of the debt: *Take thy Bill and write fourſcore*, v. 7. So he obliged his Maſter's debtors to entertain him in their houſes, when he had loſt his Stewards place; ſo he provided for himſelf. His Lord in the mean time knowing this as well as his other misbehaviors, though he could not approve the fraud and injuſtice of his Steward, yet commends the care he had of himſelf, commends the wiſdom of his Servant in making proviſion for the future: ſo it follows, *v.* 8. *And the Lord commended the unjuſt Steward becauſe he had done wiſely*;

whereupon our Saviour adds this following obſervation: *For the Children of this world, are in their generation wiſer than the Children of light.*

1. *The Children of this world* are thoſe that mind, and ſtudy the preſent World; that is the concerns and profits of it, as the great and only valuable things, and have no other end at all, but to attain to wealth and power, and what may be uſeful in this life: for whereſoever the *World* is put for one particular ſort of Men, it always ſignifies the worſer ſort: ſo in thoſe words, *John* 17. 9. *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*: and afterwards at the 16. *v. they are not of the World, even as I am not of the world.* From whence as from divers other places it hath been truly and well obſerved, that although the *World* do often ſignifie all mankind, the good and evil both together, yet where it is put for one part only, it always deſigns the worſer part.

2. Now to go on, *the Children of light*, are thoſe that profeſs the faith and hope of future Glory, and to make the attainment of that glory their chief endeavour in the World: ſo is the ſame expreſſion taken, *John* 6. 36. *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye*

ye may be the Children of the light; and ſo the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 5. *ye are all the Children of the light, and the Children of the day*: that is to ſay, ye all profeſs the faith of the Goſpel, which hath brought us out of darkneſs into light; ye all profeſs the ſtedfaſt hope of that Glory, which is promiſed in the Goſpel to us, and to make the purſuit of that Glory the chief deſign and end of life. Theſe are the perſons whom the Scriptures ſtyle *the Children of light*, and this is the reaſon why they are ſo ſtyled.

3. And then further, whereas it is ſaid that the *Children of this World are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of light*; the meaning is, that they purſue thoſe ends and intereſts which they propound unto themſelves, the advantages of this preſent World, with greater prudence care and diligence, than thoſe that profeſs the faith and hope of a better World, ſtudy and practiſe thoſe means, that are proper for the gaining of it. This is the ſenſe of the words before us, and that which I ſhall inſiſt upon, ſhewing how thoſe that look no further than preſent things, are wiſer in their affairs and intereſts, than thoſe that profeſs the

Faith and Hope of future happineſs are in theirs. And this I ſhall ſhew,

1. In ſome circumſtances which relate to the ſeveral ends, which theſe two different ſorts of perſons ſeverally propound unto themſelves.

2. And ſecondly in their different behaviour, as to the means to their ſeveral ends.

1. And for the former of theſe particulars.

1. Let it be conſidered in the firſt place, that they that are wiſe for the preſent World, fix and ſettle a certain end, that is, the advantages of this World, as a certain ſcope, a ſtanding mark to direct and govern all their actions. They firmly reſolve upon their end, and reſolve never to vary from it upon any conditions whatſoever: Whereas now on the other hand, many of them that profeſs the Goſpel never come to any ſuch reſolution, in the end which they ought to aim at in all their actions and endeavours; that is to ſay, eternal happineſs revealed, and promiſed in the Goſpel.

Some there are that profeſs the Goſpel, who never take this great end into any degree of conſideration; never enter upon any deliberations, any counſels

ſels at all relating to it: but live by chance, live by occaſion, chuſe and refuſe as occaſion ſerves, never once taking into their thoughts any certain and ſtable end of life, much leſs the greateſt end of all; everlaſting life in the World to come.

Others there are, who do ſometimes deliberate of the end of life, think with themſelves for a little while, what they ſhould make their principal end; and by theſe thoughts do in ſome meaſure incline themſelves to prefer the future before the preſent, future glory and immortality before the vanities of this World: but never fix thoſe inclinations upon their hearts, break off their thoughts and deliberations, before they come to a certain iſſue, ſo as that nothing ſhall divert them from it, not all the allurements of the World, nor all the dreads and dangers of it: And this is the reaſon of the inſtability of their lives, of their inconſtancy in their actions, of their reeling and ſtaggering to and fro between theſe preſent and future things. They never fix eternal glory as the principal end and deſign of life, as thoſe that deſign the preſent World, ſettle its profits and enjoyments, as the certain end and deſign of theirs.

Add hereunto, what is very ſtrange, that they that make the World their end, are more regardful of the future within their proper ſphere and compaſs, than ſome that profeſs the Faith and hope of future Glory. And this indeed is the very thing, which is commended in the Steward; that he conſidered what he ſhould do, how he ſhould provide for time to come, being now to loſe the place he had. This is the inſtance wherein the Children of this World are ſaid to be wiſer in their Generation than the Children of light; a great reproach to infinite numbers, that profeſs the hopes of a bleſſed immortality, that they ſhould be much leſs ſollicitous for everlaſting and endleſs ages, than others for that little time (if any at all, for that's uncertain) which is future in the preſent World.

2. The Children of this World having once fixed and ſetled their end, concluded what the thing ſhall be, which they will make the main deſign and end of life, do always keep that end in view, always preſerve it in their thoughts, live in the daily conſideration, and conſtant contemplation of it. They have it in view in all their Counſels, their Counſels are directed by it. It is

that

that Star they have in their eye in the whole progreſs and courſe of life, the thoughts of it never depart from them; they rather forget to eat, or drink, or take the reſt, which even Nature it ſelf requires, than that they have made the end of life, the advantages of the preſent World.

But how do they (or moſt of them) behave themſelves that profeſs the hopes of eternal life? Is this life always in their thoughts? Is future Glory and Immortality always preſent to their minds? do they live in the conſtant view of everlaſting reſt and happineſs? Or do not the *cares*, do not *pleaſures*, do not the ſmalleſt trifles of the World drive out the thoughts of future happineſs, and turn them out of the way unto it? Are they not (to uſe our Saviour's words, *Luk.* 8. 14.) *choak'd with cares, and riches, and pleaſures of this life*? are they not ſo overwhelmed in them, as to forget God and themſelves and their great end, who they are, what they have deſigned, what they have formerly fixed upon, as the principal end and deſign of life? And how much then do worldly men in their Generation, exceed the Children of light in wiſdom: thoſe keep their end in con-

ſtant view, and conſtantly govern themſelves by it; theſe ſuffer the thoughts of their chief end to vaniſh away from off their minds, ſuffer their paſſions from within, ſuffer temptations from without to chaſe away all the thoughts of it.

2. Having thus compared the Children of this World with the Children of Light in point of wiſdom, as to ſome circumſtances in their ends, and ſeen how much the wiſdom of the one exceeds the wiſdom of the other; let us now proceed to ſhew the like from the different behaviour ſeverally uſed in the means to their ſeveral ends.

1. And firſt of all, the Children of this preſent World, who make this World their great end, do always duly and well conſider what means are proper for their ends, and uſe an eſpecial heed and diligence, not to be cheated, and deceived. The eaſineſs of improbable means ſhall not recommend them to their practice; the difficulty of thoſe that are true and certain ſhall not hinder the choice and uſe of them: They rather chuſe to uſe much pains to good purpoſe, than never ſo little to none at all.

But they that profeſs the faith and hope of life eternal, do not ſo duly and

and well conſider, what are the ſureſt means unto it; many do not conſider at all what theſe means and methods are, ſpend no thoughts at all upon them; but while they profeſs a certain end, plainly contradict their own profeſſion by an utter neglect of all the means that ſhould lead them to the attainment of it; nay live juſt contrary to their end, and uſe no other means for heaven, than thoſe that lead them to deſtruction: ſo the Apoſtle, *Philip.* 2. 18, 19. *Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt, whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly, and whoſe glory is their ſhame, who mind earthly things.* And then further many others ſtudy to find out eaſie ways to life eternal, and rather chuſe to loſe their end in the uſe of falſe and deceitful means, than to attain it by thoſe endeavours, that ſeem more difficult, although they be more certain likewiſe.

If they can think of any method, whereby they may hope to gain a pardon, and yet notwithſtanding retain their ſin; if they can find out any arts to reconcile the hopes of heaven to the enjoyment of their luſts; if any ſuch method

thod offer it ſelf, as promiſes everlaſting happineſs, and yet permits them in their ſins, or admits a commutation for them, a penance inſtead of reformation, this is the method which they will chuſe, this is a Religion they will embrace: ſo they chuſe their own deluſions, and ſtudy to cheat, and deceive themſelves. Our Lord hath left this caution with us, as neceſſary for our eternal Salvation, *Matt.* 5. 29, 30. *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee, for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.* And who would think but that ſuch a caution ſhould firmly ſettle this belief, that every reigning, that is, every habitual luſt excludes a man from the Kingdom of Heaven? yet ſuch is the folly of infinite numbers, who do profeſs the Goſpel of Chriſt, that they do both permit their luſts to reign in them, and hope to attain to life eternal; they ſuffer themſelves to be deluded with falſe and deceitful arts and ſhifts, pretending to be the way to heaven: but ſo do not they that make the World their great end, they chuſe the means

that

that are true and proper, although more difficult in Execution, than those that are not so effectual.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that they who make this World their end, having once concluded of the means that are most proper, most effectual for this purpose, use no delay in Execution. They sleep not over their opportunities of serving their interest and advantage, they do not defer that till the morrow, which had been better done to day; but carefully improve every moment for the gaining of that they have designed. But Lord! what tedious delays are used by many professing Christianity, before they will seriously apply themselves to gain the end of that profession, or lead their lives according to it? How many trifling arts are used to put off the practice of their duties, to secure their darling beloved lusts? What mean excuses are pretended to defend and justifie their delays? How many resolutions are made, and broken? how many times are set, and put off for this great work, this necessary business of reformation? How many convictions must they suffer? How often must Conscience be awakened? what pangs and regrets must it endure?

what

what flames muſt God kindle upon it, before they will ſeriouſly apply themſelves to conſider their end, and the way unto it, ſhake off their luſts, and practiſe the Duties of Chriſtianity? See how our Lord repreſents this caſe, *Luk.* 9. at the latter end, where when he commands one to *follow* him, his anſwer is, *Lord ſuffer me firſt to go, and bury my Father.* Another receiving the like command preſently returns a like anſwer: *I will follow thee; but let me firſt go and bid them farewell which are at home at my houſe.* So we (even too too many of us) being urged to mind our great end, to ſecure our everlaſting happineſs, reſolve indeed upon repentance, and reformation, but delay to practiſe our reſolutions; theſe men put off ſo oft, ſo long, with ſuch oppoſitions to their own reaſon, ſuch contradiction to their Conſcience, till at laſt they utterly lay aſide the very deſign and purpoſe of it, and never think any more of it, unleſs perhaps the arreſt of ſickneſs, or the ſenſe of approaching near to death, revive their former reſolutions; and then the Miniſter is called for, then the Sacrament, then abſolution is deſired, with what ſucceſs God only knows, I will not undertake to ſay. However thus much

much I may pronounce, that the weakeſt and moſt imprudent perſons, do not manage the affairs of this life with ſo little prudence and foreſight, as theſe the concernments of life eternal.

3. As the Children of this World uſe no delays in the Execution of the means, which they judge moſt proper for their ends; ſo they are not heedleſs and incogitant, but ſtrangely diligent in the execution: They do intirely give up themſelves to ſerve the end which they have choſen: They mind, they purſue this one thing only; they do not halt between two opinions, but ſacrifice every other thing for the ſervice of their main deſign. They will deny their eaſe, and pleaſure, they will deny their reputation, they will bridle their natural luſts and paſſions, they will do any violence to themſelves, to attain the end they have propounded as the great deſign, and end of life. But how do they (many of them) behave themſelves, who profeſs the hope of life eternal, and the attaining of that life to be their chief and principal end? do they ſubmit all ends to this? do they conſecrate all their labours to it? do they entirely yield themſelves to the ſervice of God, and their own Souls? do

do they not halt between *Chriſt* and *Belial*? is it no part of their deſign to ſerve any other end but one? do not God and Mammon divide their thoughts? hath not Mammon a ſhare with God? is there no darling beloved luſt that cools their affections, checks their endeavours after heaven? how ſhall we anſwer theſe queſtions? alas! they are anſwered by our experience: Experience ſhews how much the men that make profeſſion of the Goſpel, and of the hope of life eternal, mind and endeavour other ends, even more than that one needful thing, that chief principal end of all, of attaining to eternal happineſs. For theſe men, while they make profeſſion of ſerving this deſign only, in the mean time ſacrifice to their luſts, ſacrifice to their eaſe and pleaſure, ſacrifice to their pride and avarice, divide their hearts, and ſhare their endeavours between the preſent and future things; and do not ſo heartily ſeek for heaven, as the Children of this preſent World ſeek the advantages of the World.

4. Laſtly the Children of this World purſue their ends and intereſts in it without ceſſation or interruption: nothing ſhall divert, nothing interrupt, nothing break off their labours after it. They do

do not ſtand to gaze on trifles, to pleaſe their eyes, to fill their ears with things, wherein they are not concern'd; but ſtill perſiſt and perſevere in ſteady purſuit of their deſigns. But they that ſeem, they that pretend to ſeek after the Kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, ſuffer themſelves to be diverted from their courſe by every little affair, or accident, that interpoſes in their way. They make a ſtand at the appearance of the leaſt danger, the ſmalleſt difficulty in their way; If they muſt hazard the ſmalleſt part of an eſtate, or of reputation; if they muſt deny their preſent eaſe, if they muſt forbear their preſent pleaſure in the purſuit of life eternal, all theſe difficulties muſt be removed, before they'l adventure to proceed: and if they be not removed at all, here they grow weary of well doing, here they forſake their former courſe, ſo their *latter end is worſe than their beginning*: *for it had been better for them*, ſaith St. *Peter*, *not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* And thus you ſee in how many inſtances the Children of this preſent World are wiſer than the Children of light. They fix

and

and ſettle a certain end, they always keep that end in view, they duly conſider what are the moſt effectual means in order to the gaining of it; and having once concluded this, they neither delay the execution, nor ſuffer any other ends to cool their endeavours in purſuit, or to divert or interrupt them: wherein they ſhew much more wiſdom in their ſphere, and in order to their deſigned end, than they that profeſs much higher aims, do to theirs.

And now for reflection upon this diſcourſe, I have ſomething to ſay to both the parties here concern'd, ſomething to the Children of this World, and ſomething to the Children of light.

1. To the Children of this World: and that which I have to ſay to them, is, to perſwade them to change their end, and then to retain the ſame diligence in their endeavours to attain it, which they formerly uſed to their former ends.

1. And were not the eyes of mortal men ſtrangely blinded by their luſts, and their ears infinitely dull of hearing; were not their hearts hard and ſtupid, methinks it ſhould be an eaſie thing to perſwade them to judge eternal glory, everlaſting life in the world to come, a greater, a nobler, a higher end, an end

end more neceſſary to be ſought, than whatſoever they can attain, nay hope, or propound in the preſent World: will they that pretend to be wiſe and prudent, and really are ſo in their ſphere, are ſo in their *Generation*, pretend there is more content, and quiet, more peace, and ſafety, and ſatisfaction in the purſuit of wealth, and power, or whatſoever elſe it be, which they have made their chief end, than in the ſtudy of heavenly joys? or, if they will pretend this, will they yet pretend that the joys or treaſures of this World, are more valuable than thoſe of heaven? or will they pretend that they are equal in themſelves? that they are equal in duration? that the creature is as good as God, or time as long as all eternity, a moment equal to infinite ages? If they can ſo much as pretend this, let them retain their former end, and ſtill make the World their portion: but then if this cannot be pretended, let them change their end, or loſe their credit, and forfeit all pretence to wiſdom, nay loſe their own immortal Souls.

2. But then having once changed their end, let them retain the ſame diligence, the ſame prudence in the purſuits and labours for it, which they formerly uſed to other ends.

You that would not formerly cheat your ſelves by eaſie and ineffectual means in order to what you did deſign, you that would not delay any opportunity, wherein you could poſſibly ſerve your ſelves, you that entirely gave up your hearts, and freely ſacrificed all endeavours to ſerve the end you had propounded, you that would not ſuffer any leſſer things, any charms, or flatteries, or avocations, you that would not ſuffer your eaſe and quiet, your reſt or ſleep, to interrupt you in your courſe, or to divert you from your ends; be as true and faithful to your ſelves and to your better reſolutions, as you have been to the mean deſigns, which you had formerly for the World. Having now made a better choice, be not leſs diligent in endeavor; having now greater ends in view, greater deſigns upon your minds, think what folly now it were, to be leſs in diligence than heretofore.

2. And then for you that profeſs your ſelves the Children of light, and to have made the Kingdom of God, eternal glory your great end, let me perſwade you to perſiſt in all adherence to your end, to mend your pace, to uſe more diligence in order to the attaining of it.

1. Your

1. Your end is ſuch, as that nothing poſſibly can be greater, nothing more worthy to be choſen: 'tis a *crown of life*, a *crown of glory*, *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled reſerv'd for you in the heaven*, an inheritance that never fades away.

2. And therefore fix it in your minds, live in the conſtant view of it, chuſe the means that are proper for it, put them in ſpeedy execution, loſe no time, ſpare no labour to attain it: Mind this one needful thing, give up your ſelves entirely to it. Let not the charms, let not the dreads of this preſent World, let no man's example, no man's frowns, let neither worldly hopes, nor fears divert, or break your reſolutions: you have choſen well, purſue your coice againſt the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh. Be true to your ſelves, and God will aſſiſt you by his Grace; he will enlighten you by his ſpirit, he will ſtrengthen you by his power, and tread down Satan under your feet. *And the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever*, Amen.

The Twentieth Sermon.

Matt. 6. 21.

For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

THE Firſt thing, which every man is concern'd to know, is, where he may find true happineſs. For ſeeing we all deſire this, and this deſire being the ſpring of all our Counſels and endeavours, he that hath choſen that for happineſs, which God intended ſo to be, in the very frame of humane nature, hath by this choice put himſelf into the ready way to gain it: For having made this judgment of it, that this is his chief and ſupreme good, it will be frequently in his thoughts, it will govern all his deliberate actions, it will be chief in all his deſigns, he will eſpecially ſerve this end in every inſtance of life and action, and never wilfully vary from it.

This was the reaſon why our Lord takes

takes care in the words immediately before the Text, to teach us both where we ſhould not, and where we ſhould lay up treaſures for our ſelves. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal: But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal.* He knew, that where we place our happineſs, ſtyled our treaſure in theſe words, there ſhould we alſo place our hearts. *For*, ſaith he, *where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.*

Upon which words I ſhall diſcourſe in this method.

1. I ſhall ſhew in what manner, and in what degree men ſet their hearts upon that which they judge their chief good; whether it be the wealth, and honours, the eaſe, and pleaſures of this World, or the Bliſs, and Glory of the future.

2. And then ſecondly, I ſhall conſider the ſeveral conſequences of the words, and draw ſuch concluſions from them, as deſerve eſpecial conſideration.

1. And to begin with the former general.

1. The firſt application of men's ſouls to that which they judge their ſupreme good, is a fixt and earneſt deſire of it.

2. The next to this is a firm deſign and reſolution to apply themſelves to the gaining of it.

3. And both theſe, in the third place, in ſuch degrees, that if ever any competition ariſe between this end and any other, this is preferred, and ſtill purſued, the other neglected and laid aſide.

1. The firſt application of men's Souls to that they judge their chief good, is a fixt and earneſt deſire of it; which is ſo rooted in humane nature, that no man can ever ſhake it off, wholly extinguiſh or remove it.

And the truth is, were is not ſo, that God hath planted this deſire in the very frame of man's nature, the World would preſently fall aſleep, the minds of men would drowze and ſlumber, having nothing to quicken and to awake them: the ſoul it ſelf, as buſie and active as it is, as full of various thoughts and paſſions, would be as unactive in the body, as the very body without the Soul. Deſire is the principle of all action, and this deſire of being happy, the ſpring of all our other deſires: this moves and quickens all within us, this

puts

puts life into all our powers, excites our thoughts, forms our Counſels, lays our deſigns, ſtirs up and animates all endeavours: This holds the eye of the mind open, this keeps the Soul it ſelf awake, and puts it into continual motion; for whatſoever it be we do, 'tis done in the view and conſideration, of what we believe to be good for us, and ſome way tending to our happineſs; remove this out of the eye of a man, and the cleareſt reaſons that you can urge, will never excite his will to choice, much leſs engage him unto action. He cannot act, where he cannot hope; nor can he hope where he ſees nothing to be deſired. Say you whatſoever you can to move him, he will always have this to ſay for himſelf, the thing you propound no way tends to any advantage, it doth not ſerve any end of mine, and therefor why ſhould I undertake it? give me that which will do me good, let me ſee how it tends unto my welfare, let me know what account I ſhall find in it; prove that I ſhall be better for it, either in this, or another World, and then you may perſwade me to it.

Nor doth this deſire of a man's own happineſs contradict or prejudice publick welfare; for every wiſe man un-

derſtands, that his own particular and private good is always involved in publick welfare: and every good man makes it a part of his own happineſs to ſerve the advantage of other perſons; and beſides, he knows that he ſhall be rewarded hereafter for it. And although we cannot all be wiſe, yet every man may at leaſt be good. But after all, both the good, and evil, wiſe, and unwiſe always deſire ard chuſe that, which makes at leaſt the faireſt appearance of contributing to their own felicity.

This is the reaſon why God himſelf applies himſelf to this deſire in the whole œconomy of his providence, in all his dealings with mankind.

When he preſcribes his Laws to us, he urges obedience to theſe Laws by promiſing happineſs thereunto; which promiſe yet could have no effect upon us, had we no deſire of being happy: on the ſame account, he threatens miſery to the violation of his precepts: which yet would be to little purpoſe, could we be contented to be miſerable, or ceaſe to deſire our own felicity.

'Tis the ſame method which he uſes in all his other addreſſes to us; when he rebukes, when he perſwades, when he expoſtulates and reaſons with us, he

ſtill

ſtill accommodates all theſe things to that deſire of being happy, which he hath ingrafted in our natures, as the firſt mover in all our actions.

Sometimes indeed he applies himſelf unto the natural deſire Men have of peace and ſafety in the world. And ſo he did to the Jewiſh Nation, *Deut.* 30. 15. *See*, ſaith he, *I have ſet before thee this day life, and good; death, and evil:* and after that, at the 19. *v. I call heaven and earth to record this day againſt you, that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing; therefore chuſe life*, that is to ſay, chuſe obedience, *that both thou and thy ſeed may live.*

But the great applications made unto us in the Goſpel are addreſſed to that deſire in man, which moves him both to deſire to *be*, and to *be happy* to all eternity. *This is the promiſe*, ſaith St. *John, that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life*, 1 John 2. 25. And ſo St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. where he tells us, that *God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation, and wrath; tribulation*

and

and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.

Thus he that made us, and knows our nature, and all the ſprings of motion in us, in all his applications to us accommodates himſelf to that deſire of being happy, which he himſelf hath planted in us; as knowing this to be the way to gain a ready complyance from us.

On the ſame account the great deceiver of mankind paints his Baits, covers his Snares, gilds his Temptations, with an appearance of what is good: He knows it would be a vain thing to attempt to preſs us unto the choice of what is evil, what is deſtructive to our ſelves, ſhould it appear in its own likeneſs, and therefore he puts a diſguiſe upon it. He boldly told the Woman in Paradiſe, that if they would eat what God had forbidden, *their eyes ſhould be opened, they ſhould be as Gods, knowing good and evil:* for if as Gods, then ſurely wiſe, and bleſſed, and happy. And thus the temptation found Succeſs, which firſt brought ſin into the World, and Death as the wages due unto it.

Nor was it a much different method whereby he applyed himſelf to Chriſt, *for he took him,* as the Goſpel tells us, *into*

into an exceeding high Mountain, and ſhewed him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them, and ſaid unto him, all theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down, and worſhip me, Matt. 4. 8, 9. Obſerve what a ſcene he ſpreads before him, and how he varniſhes and paints it over: he ſhews him *Kingdoms*; glorious things! yea *all the Kingdoms of the World*: he ſhews him *the glory* of theſe Kingdoms; not the cares, not the ſolicitudes, not the labours, or dangers, that attend them, but only the glory and ſplendor of them: and then offers them all unto him, if he would but do him homage for them. And though the temptation made no impreſſion upon him, whoſe Kingdom was not of this World; yet was it craftily laid and aimed, ſeeing mankind are greatly prone to believe the glory of this World the greateſt happineſs and felicity; and ſeeing alſo, that the firſt application of Men's Souls, to what they believe ſo to be, is a fixed and earneſt deſire of it.

2. The next to this is a firm deſign and reſolution to apply themſelves to the gaining of it; from which they cannot be removed, if they judge it poſſible to attain it, and if, in truth, this be the thing, in which alone they place their happineſs. Theſe

Theſe things allowed, the greateſt difficulties, the hardeſt labours, the ſharpeſt reſiſtance and oppoſitions, will ſcarcely diſcourage reſolution, nor hinder endeavours to obtain it.

If it be difficult for mankind to reduce their natural inclinations to a complyance with Chriſt's precepts; to deny inordinate ſenſualities to ſenſual appetites and deſires; to deny unlawful gains and intereſts to the deſire of wealth and riches; to mortifie pride, to ſubdue ambition, and all the ſpawn of theſe vices, envy, malice, and animoſity; to retain piety towards God in a profane and wicked age, truth and juſtice towards Men in a deceitful injurious World: If it be difficult thus to do; yet he that hath firmly fixed theſe principles in his mind, that this is the only way to heaven, and heaven alone the place of happineſs, will attempt to make his way thither through theſe or any other difficulties, in the view of the glory ſet before him.

I dare not attempt to deſcribe the reproaches and contradiction, to diſplay the injuries and affronts, that our Lord endured throughout his life, much leſs the agonies of his death, or his incomparable patience in them. Only thus much

much I ſhall obſerve, that what he had of man in him was ſtill ſupported, and born up by the ſtedfaſt view and conſideration of that he had choſen for his happineſs: *of that joy that was ſet before him*; for this *joy he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*; and ſo doing, *is now ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. 12. 2.

And what an account of the labours and ſufferings of St. *Paul*, is that we read, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. and the following verſes. *In labours more abundant, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft, of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwrack, a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own Countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderneſs, in perils in the ſea, in perils among falſe brethren, in wearineſs, in painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold, and nakedneſs, beſides theſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches?* What an accumulation of things is here! of things moſt

moſt grievous to fleſh and blood! heaps upon heaps of all the ſeveral troubles, and dangers, which the life of man is expoſed unto in the preſent World. But what impreſſion did theſe calamities make on him, who had deſigned eternal happineſs? Did he leave the way that leads unto it in conſideration of theſe evils? did he turn his back upon future glory, and quit the further purſuit of it, and retreat to the eaſe, and peace, and ſafety, which he had enjoyed, while he was a Phariſee? No, ſo far was he from ſo doing, that he reckoned *the ſufferings of this preſent World not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. and *doubtleſs*, ſaith he, *I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and count them but dung that I may win Chriſt——that I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I may attain to the reſurrection of the dead*, that is to a bleſſed immortality, *Phil.* 3. 8, 10, 11.

To this he preſſed through all the dangers, all the ſufferings that did encumber

cumber the way unto it: This he believed to be his happineſs, and therefore reſolved to be true to himſelf in the unwearied purſuit of it.

And although it may ſeem to be ſomething ſtrange, that they who imploy all their thoughts in the periſhing things of the preſent World, that they who have no deſign for Heaven, ſhould yet deſign their own happineſs; yet this is the thing which even they deſign alſo.

'Tis true indeed they have miſtaken in their choice, they have ſuffered themſelves to be abus'd, either by the outward gloſs and ſplendor that ſhines on the face of wealth, and honour, or by the eaſe they find, or fanſie in the delights of the preſent World; and ſo they miſtake a meer appearance, a ſhew, a ſhadow of felicity, inſtead of the very thing it ſelf. It is a vanity which they follow, but a vanity under a ſhew of happineſs.

What ſo vain as popular fame? the breath of rude, and ignorant people? yet fame is happineſs ſuch as it is, unto the proud, and ſenſual pleaſures unto the ſenſual, and wealth and riches unto the Covetous; and therefore they who have placed their deſires upon theſe enjoyments, in hope that they ſhall be happy

happy in them, ſpare no labour, refuſe no troubles to attain them. It is not the diſtance of the thing, wherein they hope for ſatisfaction, nor the ſliperineſs of the way unto it (though as hard to climb as a rock of Ice) it is not the fear of ſliding back, nor the difficulty of proceeding forward, that can obſtruct the purſuit of it: they will preſs on through the greateſt ſtraits, and labour to climb the higheſt difficulties, if there be hope to attain unto it; and as for thoſe, who cannot hope for any advantage by a ſin, but what they find in the ſin it ſelf, they are ſo degenerate in their natures, that they pleaſe themſelves in doing evil, and this very pleaſure they make their happineſs: and ſo they abandon themſelves unto it, although it lead to eternal miſery. And ſo I proceed to the third particular, which is,

3. That Men do ſo deſire, and ſo purſue the thing, wherein they place felicity, that if ever a competition ariſe between that end, and any other; that is preferred, and ſtill purſued, the other neglected, and laid aſide.

And certain it is, that although it be true and real happineſs, though it be the glory of Heaven it ſelf, which we have pro-

propounded to our ſelves, as the only thing that will make us happy; yet ſuch is the vanity, ſuch the frailty of humane Nature, ſuch are the temptations of the World, ſuch is the ſubtilty and activity of the great deceiver of Mankind, that we muſt expect to find ſomething of competition between this great and excellent end of ſerving God, and our own happineſs, and others of infinitely leſs importance.

We are compounded of fleſh, and ſpirit; and the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, as well as the ſpirit againſt the fleſh. We are made up of body, and mind; and the body will prompt the deſire and ſtudy of bodily pleaſure, and eaſe, and ſafety, beyond allowed and lawful meaſures: ſenſe will oppoſe it ſelf to reaſon, nay ſenſe will combate Faith it ſelf; eſpecially where the way to Heaven is beſet with the troubles of this World, loſs of favour, decay of eſtate, eclipſe of honour and reputation, and where the ſlipping a little aſide will not only ſerve to give ſecurity, but great acceſſion to all the advantages of this life. In this caſe, ſenſe will paint a hideous repreſentation of all the ſufferings and calamities, and give a glorious ſhew and luſter to the advantages

of this World, in the imaginations, and minds of men.

Add hereunto that we live in a throng of ill examples; such as may toss us to and fro (like men in the midst of a moving crowd) without a vigorous opposition. We are apt to believe, that if the liberties commonly used be not expedient or lawful for us, neither could they be so to other persons; but seeing others plainly believe them so to them, we have reason to judge them so to us. For as all men are of the same mould; so are they under the same Laws: so that we have no more to lose than others, nor they any less to save than we.

Nor is the Devil asleep or mindless, how he may divert our course to Heaven: *He walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. His approaches to us are invisible, his insinuations quick and pressing, and then especially applied and urged, when he finds us ruffled and discomposed by the hopes and fears, and ill impressions that other temptations have made upon us. And thus it sometimes comes to pass, that wise, and good, and vertuous persons do by surprise either make a stand, or a false step in the way to Heaven.

But here now is their great advantage,

tage, that having formerly fixed upon Heaven, and the glory of it, as their only happineſs; having deliberately choſen piety, and ſincere obedience to Chriſt's precepts, as the only means of arriving there, this habit of mind, by the grace of God, ſoon recovers it ſelf again, recollects it ſelf, finds its miſtake, reſcues it ſelf from the ſurprize, and returns to God and it ſelf again, juſt as the needle to the Pole; and fixes, where it was fixed before; and prefers the reward of future glory beyond whatſoever this preſent world can bring into competition with it.

On the contrary, if a man hath choſen the periſhing vanities of this World, as things wherein he hopes for happineſs; he will purſue, and prefer theſe whenſoever a competition happens between this World, and that to come: perhaps his Conſcience may ſmite him for it, perhaps his reaſon may for a while make ſome reſiſtance and oppoſition, he may poſſibly find ſome reluctancies within himſelf, and waver and fluctuate for ſome time between ſome contrary hopes, and fears; hopes of the end which he hath propounded, and fear of loſs in another ſtate. But if the thing, which he hath deſigned, be that, wherein he places happineſs, his

hopes will at length baffle his fears; either remove the conſideration, and exclude the thoughts of another world, or elſe ſhake the belief of it, or teach him ſome deceitful arts of reconciling the hopes of Heaven with the enjoyment of his luſts: for what men love and value moſt, that will have the command of them in every conteſt and competition.

And this is the reaſon why our Lord takes ſuch care to give us a true account of things; to ſtate their real value to us, to put us in mind, how much the joys and treaſures of Heaven tranſcend the treaſures that are on earth, ſeeing moth and ruſt conſume the latter, and that thieves may rob and ſpoil us of them, while the former are not only durable, not only eternal in themſelves, but beyond the reach of theft, and rapine.

Thus doth our Lord adjuſt and rate the worth of things, that we may learn to chuſe aright, to eſteem that moſt, which beſt deſerves to be ſo eſteemed; to judge that beſt, which is the beſt for having judg'd it ſo to be, we ſhall fix our hearts and deſires upon it, apply our ſelves to the gaining of it, and that in ſuch degree and manner, that when ever

a

a competition happens between this end and any other, this will not fail to be preferred in all our deliberate thoughts and actions.

2. Having thus ſhewed in what manner and what degrees men ſet their hearts upon their treaſure, upon that which they make their chief good, I ſhall now draw ſome ſuch concluſions from the words, as deſerve our eſpecial conſideration.

1. And firſt of all, if the heart will be where the treaſure is, we may conclude Men's treaſure is there, wherever it be that we find their hearts: for theſe are inſeparable each from other.

Whatſoever it is that Men prefer in all their deliberate thoughts and counſels, and ſo purſue in all their actions, that they will rather loſe, or hazard all other things, than miſs of it, that moſt undoubtedly is their treaſure. If a man will defraud, or oppreſs his neighbour for the heaping up of wealth and riches, this man hath *mammon* his God, and from this Idol expects felicity. If he will violate truth and juſtice, reproach, or flatter, or diſſemble, to advance himſelf to power, and honour; theſe are the things he makes his happineſs, and as for thoſe that indulge their ſenſual inclinations in contradicti-

on to Christ's Precepts, and the just hopes of a better life, they describe themselves in *the 2d. chapter* of the Book of Wisdom, *v.* 5,6. &c. *Our time*, say they, *is a very shadow, that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning: for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the Creatures like as in youth: Let us fill our selves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us: Let us crown our selves with rose-buds, before they be withered: Let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness: Let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place: for this is our portion, and our lot is this.* And true it is, whatsoever it is that men pursue with preference unto all other things, that is the thing they make their portion.

And what is the use of this discourse? that Men may know, what it is they make their chief Good; and to make it appear how much they often mistake themselves in the choice thereof, when they are little aware of it. Who will believe so ill of himself, as that he values the treasures on earth more than those of Heaven it self? who will believe, he hath chosen wealth, or power,

or

or honour, or the periſhing pleaſures of this life, as his ſupreme and chief good? and yet if none have ſo choſen, why do ſo many ſo purſue theſe very things? why ſo ſtudy this preſent World, as to forget and neglect the other?

Men live by ſight, and not by Faith: they chuſe by ſenſe, and not by reaſon: and they are ſurprized into this choice by the early acquaintance which they contract with what is pleaſing unto ſenſe, before they imploy their underſtandings; and when they arrive at the uſe of them, they make no other uſe of reaſon, than for the gaining of that end, which they had formerly choſe by ſenſe. Did they uſe faith, nay reaſon it ſelf in the choice of the great end of life, they would not chuſe, as now they do; Faith would fix upon that Glory which God hath promiſed, although future and inviſible: *for faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.*

Reaſon would make a reaſonable choice, the mind would conſult its own advantage. That which is ſpiritual, and immortal, would chuſe immortal and ſpiritual joys. Reaſon would never judge it reaſonable to be a ſervant and ſlave to ſenſe: it would never be-

lieve that ſenſible things would give ſatisfaction to a ſpirit, that things uncertain would give a ſtable and certain happineſs: that we can be happy after death by that which will leave us when we die: that we can be bleſſed in any enjoyment of ſhorter duration than our ſelves, that is, than our immortal ſouls: from whence it appears, that they who have choſen the periſhing things of this world, as the very beſt and chief enjoyments, (which they have done, who purſue theſe things with greater care than any other) have neither choſen by Faith, nor reaſon, and therefore have cauſe to mend their choice.

2. For ſecondly, ſeeing the heart will be where the treaſure is, this ſhews of what importance it is to make a true and a right judgment of what is true and laſting treaſure; that is, to chuſe that for happineſs which is in truth the thing we ſeek, and will not deceive our expectations.

He that miſtakes in this buſineſs, fails in the choice of that end, whereby his whole life is governed; which therefore, upon this account, is nothing but one continued errour: he thinks indeed that he hath pitched upon an excellent and worthy thing: he fanſies great content

rent and pleaſure in view of the thing which he hath deſigned: he employs and buſies all his thoughts, he contrives and orders all his Counſels, bends all his labours to attain it; and though it coſt him many a thought, many a tedious and weary ſtep, yet he makes no doubt, but that it will anſwer all his hopes, that it will reward him for all his pains, that it will prove worthy of all his cares. He verily believes that he ſhould be happy, if he could but once attain unto it.

Yet ſo it is, every ſtep he makes towards it, ſets him further from true happineſs: the further he goes, the further is he out of his way; his back is upon the thing he ſeeks, and his face on a falſe appearance of it: It is a vanity, it is a deluſion, which he hath choſen, he is under a very ſad miſtake: and, to uſe the Prophet *Iſaiahs* words, *Iſa.* 44. 20. *A deceived heart hath led him aſide, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor ſay, is there not a lie in my right hand?*

And well it were, if it were only loſs of labour for a man to purſue that as his happineſs, which is not really and truly ſo: but it is infinitely worſe than ſo, it is pernicious, and deſtructive. For he that chuſes a falſe end, as the ſcope of

of all his aims, and labours (as every man doth, who doth not chuſe what God commands) is thereby led and hurried on to the greateſt errours, the greateſt evils that offer themſelves, as means to get it: if he makes it his end to promote and propagate a falſe; if he ſeek his end in ſenſuality, no wonder if he bebauch himſelf *by riot and drunkenneſs, chambering and wantonneſs, by making proviſion for the fleſh for the fulfiling the luſts thereof.* If he believe, juſt contrary to our Saviour's words, *Luk.* 12. 15. that *a mans* life doth conſiſt in the abundance of the things, which he poſſeſſeth, can we wonder if he defraud, or oppreſs, if he lie, and diſſemble to his neighbour, or if he extort out of his hands, that he may more plentifully fill his own? He will not believe he is true to himſelf, if he be not ſo to that he hath made the end of life: and therefore that will he ſtill purſue, where ever he ſpies an opportunity, and finds an advantage to attain it: He will not be ſtartled at oppoſitions, he will not boggle at any difficulties, he will not ſpare his own pains, nor the greateſt concernments of other perſons, he will follow his end where ever it leads, if he can but hope

to

to overtake it: ſo fatal are the effects and iſſues of ſeeking our happineſs in thoſe things, where our Creator hath not laid it.

On the other hand, to place it there where he hath placed it, is an advantage next to the very fruition of it. He that truſts God, cannot be deceived: he that chuſes that which he hath promiſed, cannot be cheated or diſappointed; the thing will afford what he expects, and infinitely more than what he can imagine: he ſhall not be flattered with vain hopes, puffed up and ſwelled for a little while, and then emptied by diſappointment, and vext with the loſs of expectation. Time will diſcover the ſad miſtakes of other perſons; age, infirmities, and experience, or if not theſe, yet death at leaſt will wear off the gloſs of every vanity, of every vain and periſhing thing, howſoever it now deludes the fancie, and commends it ſelf to imagination. But time will ſtill more and more juſtifie the choice, ſtrengthen the hopes, and confirm the purpoſes and reſolutions of every wiſe and good man, and ſo conduct and lead him on to a bleſſed eternity: for having deliberately choſen the glory which God hath promiſed, as the only thing that can make him

him happy, this will effectually ſecure his innocence in all deliberate thoughts and actions. If any temptation offer it ſelf, and preſent an occaſion and opportunity to abuſe himſelf, or injure others; if it yield a very fair advantage for ſecret fraud, or open violence, to revenge himſelf, or oppreſs his neighbour; he will always have this to ſay againſt it. This is juſt contrary to my end, this is directly againſt my ſelf, whatever advantage it ſeems to offer; it contradicts my main deſign, it will not conſiſt with my former choice. If I chuſe this, I muſt unravel all I have wrought, I muſt undo all I have done, I muſt refuſe what I have choſen heretofore, and that by direction from God himſelf: and this I am reſolved I will not do. He that believes that that is his happineſs which God hath expreſly declared to be ſo, and that becauſe he hath declared it, will never believe that he can attain it, if he wilfully venture on thoſe evils, which the ſame God threatens with death eternal.

Nor doth the choice of future Glory as a man's ſupreme and chief good, ſecure him only from all the wilful acts of ſin, but effectually move and preſs him on to all diligence in his duty: for he that believes

lieves that that alone is true happineſs which Gad hath promiſed, will alſo believe that that diligence, which God hath preſcribed is neceſſary to the attainment of it. And therefore although it be ſomething difficult to raiſe his natural inclinations to purſue a ſupernatural end, to awaken his mind out of theſe flattering dreams and ſlumbers, which the charms of ſenſe have brought upon it, to keep his thoughts conſtantly bent upon his end, and excite himſelf to the greateſt labours to attain it; yet he conſiders that it is his happineſs he hath in view, that it is no leſs than eternal glory which he purſues; that to forſake the purſuit of it, is to forſake his own bliſs, and to ſurrender himſelf to miſery: that it will requite him for all his labours, and cannot be bought at too dear a rate. Thus he makes good our Saviours words, *Matt.* 13. 46. *The Kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant-man ſeeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had and bought it.*

Add hereunto the great ſupport which the faith and hope of future glory continually offers unto his mind in all the troubles and oppoſitions, which may beſet the way unto it. *We are troubled*

troubled, ſaith the Apoſtle *on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplext, but not in deſpair; perſecuted but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor. 4. 7, 8. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.* This, ſaith he, it worketh for us, *while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things, which are not ſeen, are eternal.*

And may the ſerious conſideration of that eternal weight of glory, which God hath promiſed us in the Goſpel, teach us to fix our hearts upon it, as the only thing that can eaſe our labours, quiet our minds, cure our maladies, and remove the burdens of mortality. This is the thing which God himſelf, who beſt knows what is good for us, and hath the ſincereſt love to us, always intended for our happineſs: this is the thing, which Chriſt our Lord came down from Heaven to reveal unto us: this is the thing, which he choſe for himſelf (and ſure he knows what is the beſt for humane nature, being God and Man in the ſame perſon) He lived in the conſtant view of it,

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he died to purchaſe it for his followers; he roſe again, he aſcended to Heaven, and there abides, not only to enjoy it himſelf, but to open a way for us unto it, and to prepare a place for us. This is the thing which will ſupply all our wants, which will remove all imperfections, which will fully ſatisfie all our deſires: It is the fruition of God himſelf, and will transform us into his image as well in point of immortality, as of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and perfect holineſs: for *now are we the ſons of God*, ſaith St. *John*, *and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John 3. 2. Which bleſſed viſion he of his mercy grant unto us.

FINIS.

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